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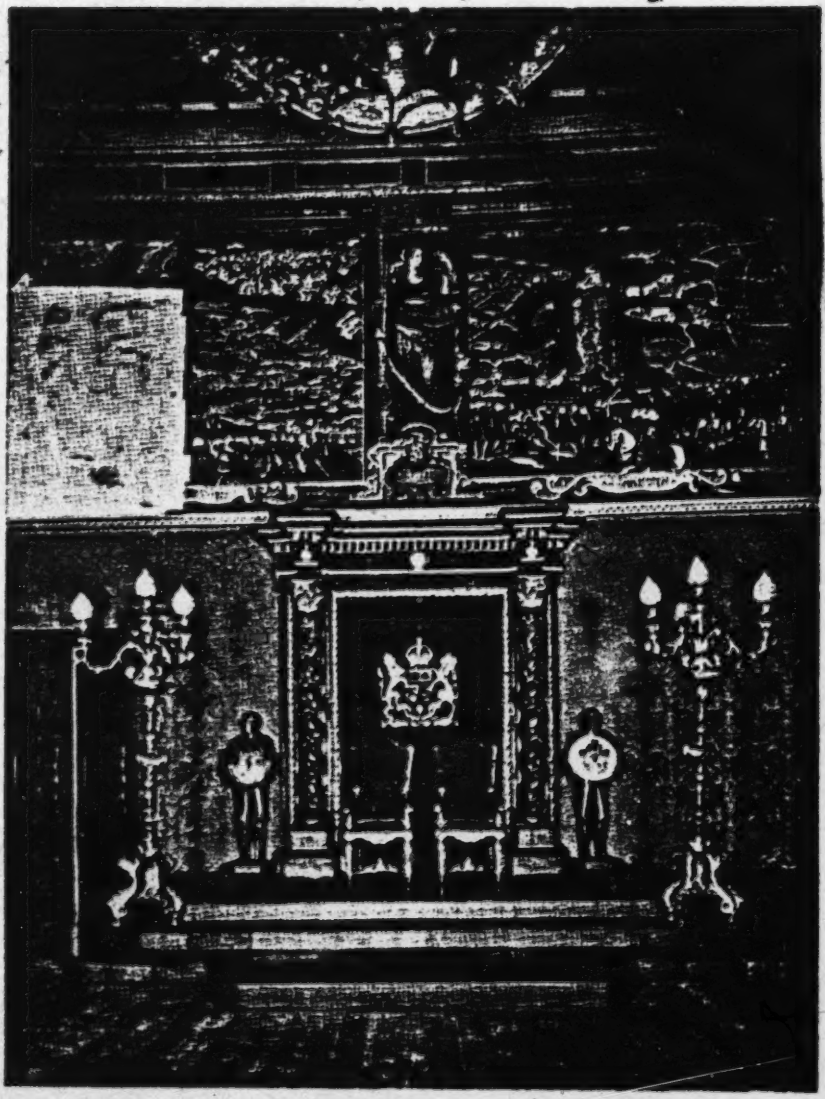

THE PALACE, VALETTA: THRONE IN HALL OF S. MICHAEL AND S. GEORGE

Above, portions of the frescoes depicting the Great Siege. The patch over the fresco to the left of the throne covers temporarily the portion of it damaged by bombing.

Fr.

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An Account and an Appreciation

MALTA

BY

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Lieutenant-Governor of Malta 1930–38

SECOND EDITION REVISED AND ENLARGED

GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD
LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY WELLINGTON

[Title page]

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[p. 4]
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To

MY COLLEAGUES OF THE
MALTA CIVIL SERVICE
during eight strenuous, difficult and
at times tempestuous years

First published 1949
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD
182 High Holborn, London, W.C.1

Reprinted: 1950; 1954

Second Edition 1960

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Preface to the Second Edition

SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED IN MALTA SINCE THIS BOOK WAS LAST reprinted that it has seemed desirable to add a new chapter tracing the momentous developments in the Island since the end of the war. This addition apart, I have revised the book throughout in the light of new knowledge now available on subjects dealt with in the earlier parts. I have added a twentieth-century author, D. H. Lawrence, to the writers whose views on Malta are presented in Chapter XIV. A number of admirable photographs newly taken for the Government Tourist Board by Miss Ann Bolt, A.I.B.P., replace, by the kindness of Mr Philip Barker-Benfield, Chairman of the Board, certain illustrations become obsolescent.

I have fortunately been able to keep my experience of Malta up to date by almost annual visits in the last decade, including two as the guest of Sir Gerald and Lady Creasy, three more prolonged visits to Major-General Sir Robert and Lady Laycock, and a more recent one to Admiral Sir Guy and Lady Grantham, to all of whom I am greatly indebted for their sustained hospitality, as to Captain and Mrs Olof Gollcher on earlier occasions.

In renewing my thanks to those mentioned in the earlier preface, I must also record my gratitude to the late Lieutenant-Governor, Mr Trafford Smith, C.M.G.; Colonel Victor Vella, C.V.O.; Dr the Hon. Lewis Galea, C.B.E.; Dr V. A. Depasquale (the Librarian) and Mr Joseph Galea of the Royal Malta Library, for information on several points. Mr Charles Zammit, now Director of Antiquities, has been most helpful with illustrations of the prehistoric period. I thank Sir Hannibal Scicluna and the Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale of the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction for the photograph of Caravaggio's *Beheading of S. John the Baptist* after restoration in Italy, the *Times of Malta* for the view of Mdina, Mr Wilfred Flores for taking for me the colour photograph which forms the frontispiece, and, for two photographs, the Result Studio of Sliema.

H.C.L.

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Preface to the First Edition

12 I HAVE THE PLEASANT DUTY TO EXPRESS MY THANKS TO VARIOUS friends for help in several directions: to the Chevalier H. P. Scicluna, M.B.E., for many years the Director of the Royal Malta Library, for allowing me to draw on his vast store of knowledge of the records of his native island; to the lamented Sir Themistocles Zammit, most lovable and human of savants, who introduced me, a newcomer to Malta, to those Stone Age wonders he did more than anyone else to reveal and interpret to the world; to Miss Norah Penhaligon for the kindness and patience with which she undertook research on my behalf while I was cut off from libraries and works of reference at the other side of the globe; to Mr George Bonello, M.B.E., of the Lieutenant-Governor's office, for help in other respects.

I have to thank also the following friends for allowing me to use photographs taken or procured by them: Gwenllian, Lady Palmer (garden of Dar il-Lyuni); Major the Hon. James Galizia, C.B.E.; the late Rev. A. Spiteri, O.P. (Tapestry Chamber); Mr Stewart Perowne, O.B.E.; Brigadier W. N. Stokes, O.B.E., D.S.C.; Mr Charles Zammit, who is following in his father's footsteps at the Malta Museum. By a piquant circumstance the photograph of Dragut's tomb was given me in Tripoli by a member of the once reigning dynasty of Karamanli, whose ancestors were a thorn in the side of the Grand Masters in the last century of their rule in Malta.

My thanks are similarly due to the R.A.F., the Malta Museum, the Malta Government Tourist Bureau and the Director of Public Works, while I owe to the courtesy of the Administration of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris the photograph of the jewelled hilt of the sword sent by Philip II to Grand Master La Valette.

I have also drawn on the work of Malta's excellent professional photographers, especially Mr E. A. Gouder. Likewise represented are Messrs R. Ellis, the Grand Studio, S. L. Cassar, G. Fürst (women in *faldettas*), all of Valetta; Messrs M. Farrugia of Gozo and Felice of Pawla. The photograph of the Inca monoliths at Ollantay-Tampu in Peru is by Martin Chambi of Cuzco, a Peruvian Indian.

H.C.L.

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The letter *x* in Maltese is pronounced like the English *sh*; *q* is a hard guttural. A dot over *c* and *g* (*ċ* and *ġ*) indicates that those letters are then to be pronounced respectively like *ch* in "chair" and the soft *g* in "giant."

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To Malta, through our Mediterranean Sea.

MARLOWE

Je ferai halte,
Car l'âge m'alourdit un peu,
Aux blanches terrasses de Malte
Entre l'eau bleue et le ciel bleu.

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle Paul to God;
"Once we frapped a ship, and she laboured woundily.
There were fourteen score of these,
And they blessed Thee on their knees,
When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under Malta
by the sea!"

RUDYARD KIPLING

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CHAPTER I

Introductory

MY EIGHT CROWDED YEARS OF LIVING AND WORKING IN Malta—preceded by two brief halts as a temporary Naval Officer towards the end of the First World War—taught me a little about Maltese affairs and conditions, perhaps as much as a mere sojourner may expect to absorb in less than a decade. And the more I discovered about Malta and the Maltese, the better I grew to like both. What I then acquired, and retain, was an affection neither uncritical nor undiscriminating but based on the beginnings of understanding, I hope, of a small but complex community. I should be glad to think that something of what I have learned about and feel for those two remarkable little islands has found expression in the following pages.

This book is not a guide, it is not a handbook, it is not a history, it is not a collection of personal reminiscences, even if a personal note may be faintly audible here and there. It is above all not a commentary on Malta's politics, although I had my fill and more of these during my eight years. Twice during this period was Self-Government suspended and twice did I assume departmental charge under the Governor of the civil administration (having been concerned during Self-Government only with the Imperial side of the diarchy), a type of experience common enough among politicians returning from the wilderness to office but rare to the verge of uniqueness among Civil Servants. And there were other experiences scarcely less unusual.

Nor were Maltese politics of mere local, parish-pump range. Even in Homeric times Malta was looked upon as "the navel of the inland sea"; and the winds that blow upon it from every quarter, the cross-currents that buffet its rocky

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121 shores, are composed of more than the physical elements of
66 air and water. The implications and repercussions of Maltese politics when I had experience of them were unfortunately often international and sometimes politico-ecclesiastical (these can be very prickly); not infrequently they impinged upon the most fundamental constitutional principles. For the relations between Church and State have given rise to controversies that have troubled Christendom since the Dark Ages; other Maltese problems were equally deeply rooted in a long and complicated past. Their implications and repercussions bore, in fact, a striking resemblance in certain directions to those of politics in the Palestine of the Mandate, where I had previously served. Happily the Maltese scene lacked one factor—the ambiguity of the established policy—which in Palestine made an administrator's life a hell on earth; in other respects politics in Malta could be almost as corrosive, almost as pervasive. But they will not pervade this book, nor even enter it except occasionally for the sole purpose of *constatation*, that untranslatable word.

121 These, then, are the things which this book is not. I find it less easy to state what it is. I have called it an "Account and an Appreciation" because I can think of no better definition of what I have tried to do in the chapters that follow. A reviewer of one of my previous books remarked that Malta was the only part of the Mediterranean about which I had not written. At least I have now repaired that omission, if omission it may claim to have been.

114 The book was begun in Malta, continued in Barbados,
[128] finished, of all places, in the Straits of Magellan, the eye-witness account of whose discovery, written by Antonio Pigafetta, a Knight of the Order of S. John, was dedicated to Philippe Villiers de L'Isle Adam, the first Grand Master of the Order to reign in Malta. I left Malta in 1938, whisked from the land-locked Mediterranean, where from choice I had served during most of my career, to the greatest of the oceans, the Pacific, at the other side of the globe. Since my

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return to the Old World I have fortunately been able to revisit Malta a good many times, but in the interval it had suffered the greatest physical damage in its history, had undergone more external change than at any time since the Knights of S. John converted the "barren rock" of their first impressions into one of the most thickly built-up geographical units in the world. 114

In the circumstances I may well have fallen into errors of commission and omission, for which, if so, I ask the reader's indulgence.

"Even S. Paul," say the Maltese encouragingly—for S. Paul is Malta's most deeply venerated saint—"even S. Paul suffered shipwreck in Malta."

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CHAPTER II

Where and What is Malta?

133 SEVENTEEN MILES IN LENGTH AND NINE MILES ACROSS AT ITS widest, with its long axis running north-west and south-east, Malta is the principal island of one of the smallest archipelagoes in the world, a survival from those remote days when continents were differently shaped and the Mediterranean was a cluster of fresh-water lakes, divided by land bridges that connected Europe with Africa. Of one of these bridges the Maltese archipelago is to-day the sole existing pier, the one remaining fragment of a causeway along which prehistoric pachyderms and ruminants groped their puzzled way to the African warmth when driven from Europe by its increasing glaciation. Some of these mighty beasts lingered too long on the Maltese pier, and the cave of Ghar Dalam, "the Cave of Darkness," near Bir Zebbuġa at the southern extremity of the island, is a storehouse of their remains, converted in the course of ages into layers of fossil deposits as important as any of their kind in the world.

648 175 [133] This position midway between two continents has at times created doubts in the minds of scientists no less than of administrators as to the one to which Malta should properly belong, just as doubts have been expressed whether Cyprus should be held to belong to Europe or to Asia. These doubts were set at rest, from the legal point of view at all events, soon after the British Occupation. For in 1801 the Parliament of the United Kingdom gravely enacted, in clause 3 of 41 Geo. III cap. 103—or, to give the law its full title, "An Act to empower His Majesty to regulate the trade and commerce to and from the isle of Malta until the signing of a definitive Treaty of Peace, and from thence until six weeks

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after the next meeting of Parliament; and to declare the isle of Malta to be part of Europe"—

> that the said Island of Malta and dependencies thereof shall be deemed, taken and construed to be part of Europe for all purposes, and as to all matters and things whatever; any law or laws, usage or custom, or act or acts, to the contrary thereof notwithstanding.

But this enactment, although it satisfied the administrators, did not wholly silence the men of science, who produced, in addition to Europe and Africa, yet a third continental claimant to the geographical ownership of the Maltese Islands. In the middle of the nineteenth century a Maltese architect and engineer named Grognet de Vassé, best known as the designer of the great Parish Church of Mosta, propounded the theory that the submerged continent of Atlantis lay between Cyrenaica in the east and Tunis in the west, almost filling the indentations in the coast of North Africa which the Romans called Syrtes Major and Syrtes Minor and we know to-day as the Gulfs of Sidra and Gabes. Of this continent, said Grognet, the Maltese archipelago formed the north-western corner; and he published a learned treatise in support of his theory, which he based on ample references to mythology, etymology and classical geography.

It is an ingenious piece of imaginative reasoning whereby the author places the Elysian Fields and the lower world of the ancients in Atlantis, the mouths of the rivers Acheron and Phlegethon in that part of Atlantis which is Malta—namely, in the Grand Harbour and the harbour of Marsa Mxett—and an outlet of the river Styx in one of the springs of the gardens of the Villa Frere, for many years the beautiful residence and garden in Pietà of the distinguished scholar, man of letters, diplomatist and friend of Sir Walter Scott, the Right Honourable John Hookham Frere.

Nevertheless the legislators of 1801 were rightly inspired, for in climate and vegetation no less than in the works of

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man Malta is essentially European, a projection of Europe into the south. Its vegetation is of the Mediterranean type, similar to that of Southern Spain, the Riviera, Sicily and the islands of the Ægean although, strangely enough, it lacks among its wild flowers the cyclamen which so delightfully and characteristically, in springtime, carpets the ground in Cyprus and the Isles of Greece. Here and there, it is true, there rises above its pines and cypresses and carob-trees an occasional stately date-palm, suggesting a garden-escape from the groves of Tunis. And Tunis, whence come the best dates in the world, lies, be it noted, to the north of Malta. But the fruit on the date-palms of Malta practically never ripens. Malta is too European for that.

2

If anything shaped as differently from a circle as the Mediterranean can be said to have a centre, that centre is Malta. The Maltese archipelago is equidistant from the Mediterranean's western and eastern extremities; it is its half-way house between Occident and Orient, historically no less than geographically; it has been its nerve-centre—and more than its nerve-centre, its magnet—from the "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." All the people of the Middle Sea have possessed, influenced or coveted Malta at one time or another, the first to do so of whom we have definite knowledge being a small seafaring, trading and colonizing tribe from its easternmost shores. "The twin islands of Melita and Gaulos," wrote Professor Freeman, "lay immediately in the way of Phœnician adventurers" and became, and remained for centuries, a Phœnician settlement. It was the all-absorbing power of Rome that first brought them into the European fold.

As the nerve-centre, as the magnet, of the Mediterranean Malta was all but snatched back from the European fold when the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent sought

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desperately to drive out the Knights of S. John as over forty years previously he had driven them out of Rhodes. But he was now concerned with a wider issue than that of blunting once more that spearhead of the Church militant: he had grasped the point that Malta as his advanced naval base would make him the master of the entire Mediterranean. Even more fully, and for a short time successfully, was the point grasped by Bonaparte, who saw in Malta not only the naval base indispensable to the command of the Mediterranean but a vital link in the route to a farther East than Phœnician or Roman had known. Thereafter neither William II nor the Axis dictators had anything fresh to learn on the subject. Malta's strategic rôle had become a postulate.

3

At the beginning of 1959 the Maltese archipelago had an estimated population, formidable for its size, of 323,629 souls (exclusive of the personnel of the armed Services), to which Gozo contributed 27,846 and little Comino 30. That is to say that it contains close on 2700 people to the square mile, which makes it one of the most densely populated geographical units in the world. The figure would have been higher but for considerable post-war emigration to Australia and elsewhere. But if, even so, it is high when measured by the area of 121 square miles[1] on which it has to live, it is small for a separate nation. For the Maltese are a nation unto themselves, with their own language, their own traditions, their own physical characteristics and a history that is one of the longest to which any existing people can lay claim.

For some reason hitherto unexplained it was in Malta and Gozo that the art of building in remote Stone Age days reached a development of skill and refinement unknown in other centres of the megalithic and neolithic worlds. Malta was already, therefore, an ancient centre of civilization when

[1] *I.e.*, about five-sixths of the area of the Isle of Wight.

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the "tempestuous wind called Euroclydon" that still whistles across it during the winter months under its modern name of *gregale*, the "Greek wind," drove S. Paul on to its shores and brought it about that the "chief man" of the island, Publius, became its first Bishop. It was a centre of civilization, as well as a centre of the religious life of the Western Mediterranean, very much earlier, for Malta, in the words of the lamented Sir Themistocles Zammit, "was the holy island of neolithic faith, the half-way house of the early mariners, who trusted themselves to their frail wooden craft, full of hope in a protecting power."

Later, when we emerge from prehistory, we find the position reversed: Malta, instead of extending supernatural protection to peoples beyond its shores, comes under the political protection of others. During the many centuries of its recorded history Malta has had many rulers: the Phœnicians and their offspring, the Carthaginians, then Romans, Arabs, Normans, Angevins, Aragonese and Castilians, then for two and a half centuries the international Order of S. John of Jerusalem, and, finally, at the invitation of the Maltese people after a brief French occupation, the British. But despite the impact of such cosmopolitan influences this people has clung tenaciously to its ancient tongue, which is unquestionably of Semitic structure and has claims to descent from the speech of Dido and Hannibal.[1] It was, in fact, from a bilingual inscription in Phœnician and Greek found in Malta in 1697, of which more will be said in the following chapter, that the Phœnician alphabet was reconstructed. Of this inscription Dr A. V. Laferla writes in his *Story of Man in Malta*: "The construction and grammar . . . are identical with those of modern Maltese and many of the words (*lil, bin, tnejn, jisma, iberikom*) are still in use at the present day." S. Luke in the Acts describes the Maltese as "barbarians"—that is, as neither Greeks nor Romans—and

[1] The name Hannibal is still met with in Malta as a Christian name. Its Maltese diminutive is Nibblu.

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we may safely assume that S. Paul's Aramaic was as comprehensible to them as was their related Phœnician to him.

There seems to be no evidence that this Semitic speech of the Maltese "barbarians" had been replaced by some other language when the Arabs seized the Maltese islands in 870. Many of the philologists therefore hold that on to this Punic stock the Arabs grafted, during the two hundred and twenty years of their occupation, a vocabulary of contemporary Arabic which did not completely oust words of the older, kindred stratum. These scholars consider that the dialect received, in fact, a second, fresher infusion from the same reservoir and that the resulting blend is the core of the Maltese language of to-day.

Inevitably, in the course of ages, this language has borrowed words from the languages and dialects of the other countries with which Malta has been connected—from Sicilian, from Aragonese, from Italian, from French, even from English—but it has always fitted such words into its own Semitic framework, has governed them according to the rules of its own Semitic grammar and mechanics. Thus the Maltese who have emigrated to Syria and to the north coast of Africa have no difficulty in making themselves understood by their Arabic-speaking neighbours, who for their part can make themselves readily understood in Malta. Here is the Lord's Prayer in Maltese, which I quote so that the reader unfamiliar with the language may see for himself what it looks like:

Missierna li inti fis-smewwiet,
Jitqaddes ismek,
Tigi saltnatek,
Ikun li trid Int, kif fis-sema hekda fl-art.

Hobzna ta' kull jum aghtina l-lum,
Ahfrilna dnubietna, bhalma nahfru lil min hu hati ghalina.
U la ddahhalniex fit-tigrib,
Izda ehlisna mid-deni. Hekk ikun.

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And here is another example, a translation by the late Sir Augustus Bartolo, scholar, historian, orator, staunch Imperialist and one of His Majesty's Judges in Malta, of the first verse of Longfellow's *Psalm of Life*, beginning with the familiar words "Tell me not, in mournful numbers":

Tghidulix li id-dinja hi holma,
Mhiex hlief frugha, u niket, u hemm;
Dak li jidher fil-wiċċ hu qarrieqi,
Ujekk torqod ir-ruh taghna tintemm.

The formal allocutions of the present Archbishop of Malta to his flock are headed as follows:

"MICHAEL GONZI
Ghall Grazzja t'Alla
U Tas-Sedi Apostolika
ARCISQOF TA' MALTA
SAHHA U BARKA"

(Michael Gonzi, by the Grace of God and the Apostolic See Archbishop of Malta, Greeting and Blessing.)

It doesn't really look much like a dialect of Italian, does it? Yet that is the impression which Mussolini's unscrupulous and efficient propaganda bureau determined to create in Italy. It set itself to convince the Italians that the Maltese were a branch of the Italian race and that their speech was an Italian dialect—a somewhat corrupt one, perhaps—which had absorbed during the Arab occupation of their islands a certain quantity of Arabic words. Fascist propaganda would draw a false and misleading analogy between Maltese and such Italian dialects as Sicilian, which, while Italian in grammar and structure, has incorporated Arabic words with its Italian vocabulary.

In point of fact Maltese is the converse of Sicilian, since it is an Oriental language that has absorbed non-Oriental words into its Semitic structure. But Mussolini and his agents, zealously directed by his son-in-law Ciano, succeeded in making large numbers of Italians believe quite honestly—

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

197 seeing that they had no means of checking the facts for
648 themselves—what they wanted them to swallow. Even in the eighteenth century, as we shall see in Chapter XIII, an Italian visitor to Malta described the language of the Maltese as "their own perfidious idiom."

A case in point is the episode, recounted to the writer by one of His Majesty's Ambassadors to the Quirinal during the Fascist régime, concerning a Maltese football team on a visit to Italy. On their arrival in Rome the Maltese were met by the Italian team detailed to look after them, who had been well briefed to treat their visitors as 'unredeemed' blood-brothers. The Italians, knowing no reason to doubt the accuracy of their brief, greeted the Maltese footballers at the station in all good faith with a cordial address in eloquent Italian, of which their guests understood barely a word. Realizing, however, that they in their turn would be expected to say something, they replied with an equally friendly speech in Maltese, whereupon their hosts threw up their hands in mystified despair, crying, "*Ma che fratelli son' questi*—but what sort of brothers are these?"

A pleasant French contribution to Maltese is a word for
197 a train, *xmundifer* (*chemin de fer*), thought to have been
192 introduced by Maltese emigrants returning from Algeria and Tunis. And, as has been said above, English words, too, have found their way into Malta's eclectic vocabulary, words for the most part of a technical kind or related to sport. Among these is the verb "to score" which, as Professor J. Aquilina has pointed out, is conjugated as *niskorja*, I score, *skorja*, *skorjat*, *skorjajna*, *skorjaw*—he, she, we, they have scored a goal, and so on.

But it is interesting to note that we appear to be witnessing
[576] the beginnings of a two-way traffic in this connexion. The common Maltese form of greeting and farewell is *sahha*, literally "health," a word that springs easily and comfortably also to the lips of non-Maltese who have spent any time in the islands. Thanks, no doubt, to the habitual use of this

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

term by the numerous British Service men and women who have been stationed in or have passed through Malta, *sahha* has been admitted, in the form "saha," into the more recent editions of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* as an English word for "good-bye," with due acknowledgment of its Maltese origin. And perhaps "saha" is but the forerunner of others; for in its issue of the 5th January 1945 the London *Spectator* had this to say on the etymology of the word "spitchered," which occurs in one of the war books on Malta:

> The word clearly derives from the Maltese *spitta*, meaning "finished" or something similar. Naval opinion agrees with Air Force opinion on that. But naval opinion claims credit for embodying the word in the English language. And as naval opinion can point to its use as long ago as 1903, the Air Force does seem to be grounded or, indeed, spitchered on this particular point.

4

In some parts of the Old World the visitor can select, according to his tastes, the century that he prefers. It is no exaggeration to say that in Malta he can choose the millennium and more than the millennium. If he is a palæontologist he may wander about the cave of Ghar Dalam and study *in situ* the remains of the elephants and hippopotami who left their bones there when the world was yet young, and of giant swans who sailed on lakes that have long since vanished. Advancing from these and from the Neanderthal Man, of whom traces may have been found in Malta, many thousands of years into the Stone Age, he will find in Malta and Gozo a series of megalithic and neolithic sanctuaries—Tarxien, the Hypogeum at Hal Saflieni, Haġiar Qim, Mnajdra, Ġgantija, to mention only the most important—unequalled in any other part of the world.

He will find other survivals of the Stone Age, of a different sort, in the cart-tracks which traverse many of the barren

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

rocky surfaces of the island, the tram-lines of neolithic man; and he will notice, if he is observant, that the dimensions of the flat two-wheeled carts which, with their gaily caparisoned little ponies or donkeys, are the traditional vehicle of the Maltese countryman of to-day correspond almost exactly with those of the carts of his neolithic predecessor, as deduced from the width of these ancient tracks. If he is interested in strange animals that still survive but must be a living link with hoary antiquity, he can study on the picturesque, uninhabited islet of Filfla, now used only as a target for gun practice, a remarkable lizard of the darkest green spotted with red (*Lacerta muralis* var. *filfolensis*), which occurs nowhere else in the world but on this tiny and diminishing spit of rock.

The dominant architectural notes of the Maltese Islands are megalithic and Baroque, and the gamut thus established can scarcely be called a narrow one. So far as works of art are concerned, the Museum in Valetta, housed before World War II in the Auberge d'Italie and since 1958 in that of Provence, contains a scientifically arranged exhibition of Stone Age culture unrivalled in any other country. This collection, whose most bizarre items are the astonishing fat female deities characteristic of Maltese neolithic sculpture, was organized in chronological sequence by the Museum's late learned Director, Sir Themistocles Zammit, who made a second international reputation in the field of Maltese archæology and excavation after having made an earlier one in medical research in connexion with undulant, or Malta, fever.

But the visitor is not obliged to study the activities of these remote peoples solely in museums. If he wishes to see how the distant forbears of the present population cultivated their land he has only to watch the Maltese farmer of to-day ploughing his field; if he is a student of cultural survivals he will note the eye of Osiris still painted on the bows of Malta's sturdy little schooners and characteristic "Gozo boats." If

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

he cares to attend the Cathedral of Mdina, the island's earliest capital, on the 4th November, he will hear a Mass said for the repose of the soul of Roger the Norman, Count of Sicily, who ended the Arab occupation of Malta in 1090 and is there commemorated as "Deliverer of Malta and Founder of the *mensa* [table] of the Cathedral, the Bishop and the Canons." Should he chance to be in Malta before the beginning of Lent he will have the opportunity to witness in the carnival festivities not only the jollifications common to other Mediterranean carnivals but also features of more local interest, such as the Parata dance on the Palace Square, which takes its symbolism from the capture of a Maltese bride by a Moslem corsair.

If he prolongs his stay into the summer he will see on the 29th June, the feast of S. Peter and S. Paul, one of the most characteristic of Maltese popular functions in the densely thronged Mnarja races. These races, for horses and donkeys, are of unknown but undoubtedly great age. The course is a piece of straight, hard road leading uphill towards the big square in front of Mdina, a square known as the Saqqaja. Here, from his great stone box, the Grand Master in former days, in these days the Governor of Malta, hands the banners of victory down to the winning competitors, while interested spectators watch the proceedings from two smaller but similar boxes, flanking the Grand Master's and belonging to some of the leading families of the island.

The name Mnarja is a corruption of the Latin *luminaria* (illumination), for it was the custom on that day to illuminate the churches of Mdina and the adjacent Rabat in honour of the two saints. A more picturesque if unfortunately less trustworthy tradition derives Mnarja from Hymen, the goddess of marriage, it being supposed that the young men of the island were formerly in the habit of choosing their wives from among the maidens crowding to watch the contest. This much, at all events, may be urged in support of the latter theory, that until modern times Maltese brides

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

would insist on the stipulation being inserted in their marriage settlement, their *kitba taz-zwieġ*, that their husbands should take them to the Mnarja every year.

The banners given in prizes to the present day are long and narrow pieces of brocade of different colours called *paliu*, which it is the custom of the fortunate winners to take back to their casals to be used as the altar-cloth of the parish church for the ensuing year. The casals, it should be explained, are the 'villages' of Malta, if 'village' is the appropriate term, for they are stone-built compact townships with populations often running into five figures. The Maltese word for them is *hal*.

Again, our visitor will learn that the *faldetta* or *ghonnella*—the true Maltese term is *stamina*—of the Maltese women does not owe its existence, as some people allege, to the need for defence against the excessive gallantry of Bonaparte's troops, but is of much more ancient origin. If proof were needed, there is in the Royal Malta Library a print of the year 1576 showing a Maltese lady wearing the national head-dress. The *ghonnella* is a voluminous hood of rich silk—black everywhere save in the villages of Zabbar and Zejtun, where it is blue and is called *xurqana*—stiffened inside the top edge by a piece of cardboard about a yard long, one end of which rests on the head, while the other end has to be held. Originally, it was really, like the Turkish *charshaf*, a skirt or petticoat (which is what the word *ghonnella* means) thrown up over the head. Later it was curtailed, for which reason it is sometimes called *nofs ghonnella*, a half skirt; but it is still cut to show the placket-hole—in point of fact, half the placket-hole—of the garment from which it has sprung.

This striking and picturesque mode of female adornment or, rather, concealment constitutes Malta's one characteristic article of dress and is the local method of shrouding a woman's face and form, a custom common to southern latitudes from as far east as India to as far west as the Azores,

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

although the Maltese form was probably dictated by the need to cover the head when entering a church. Its one drawback is that it takes up a lot of space, more space, unfortunately, than is available in the motor-bus, modern Malta's form of land transport. Let it be hoped that it will survive these disabilities, for it is not only unique but also an asset if those of the younger generation who have abandoned it in favour of the banal dress of everywhere else would only realize the fact, enhancing beauty while discreetly veiling any imperfections. These young ladies should ponder the words of Monsieur André Maurois in his little sketch of Malta:

> When its wearer moves, the *faldetta* is filled with air, and the Maltese girls, tripping in twos and threes along the streets, look like flotillas of graceful barques with black sails, blown along their course by the wind of destiny.

Oddly enough another French visitor and Academician anticipated by just a century, and in almost the same terms, Monsieur Maurois's charming flight, or perhaps echo, of fancy. Monsieur de Lamartine, visiting Malta with his English wife in 1832, describes the *ghonnella* as

> a half-cloak of black silk . . . of a light texture caught by a breeze, suggesting the sail of a skiff whose capricious folds alternately conceal and reveal the mysterious figure of the wearer, which seems able to escape at will from its embrace.

In the Malta of an earlier age, when the lives of Maltese women and girls were closely circumscribed, the *ghonnella* was not the only aid to their seclusion. Those who wander about the country districts will notice here and there that the older farmhouses have no windows giving on to the street; the Maltese countrywoman, like her Spanish sister, had to turn her face inward, not outward. But what the houses had, and some still retain, were stone brackets on the outer wall, made to hold the pots of sweet basil which showed that

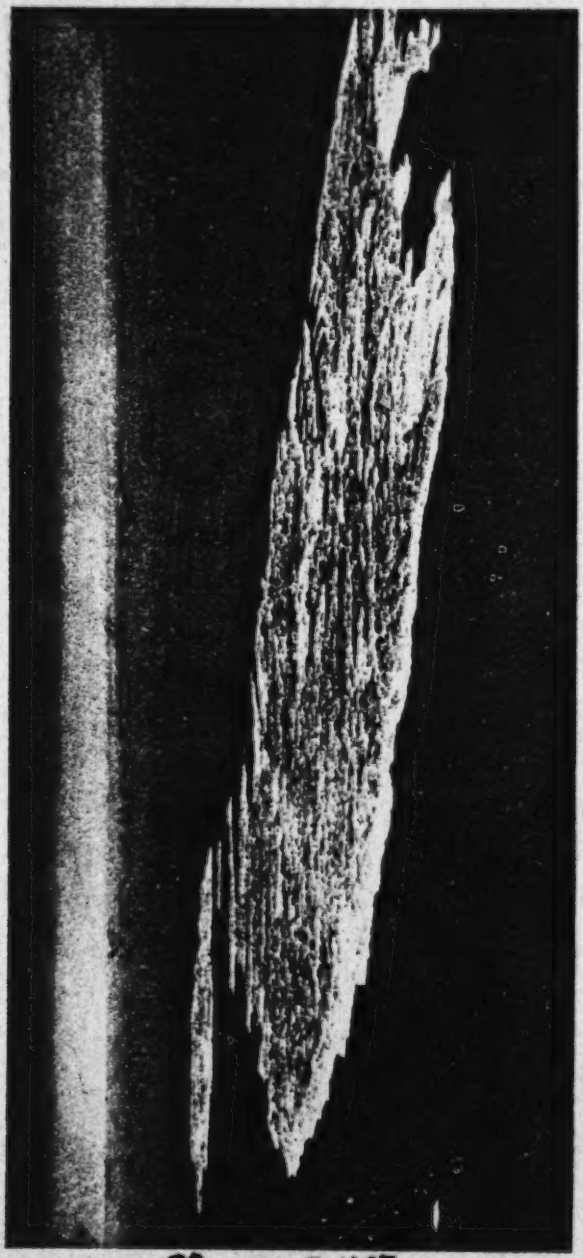
9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

562 342 584 824 291 a marriageable daughter lived within. One pot of basil to each marriageable girl. So the potential swain could tell at a glance whereabouts to loiter for a discreet preview and what address, should he be interested, to give to the marriage-broker.

[pp 31–55 of text not processed. Plates facing pp 40, 41, 48 and 49 have been processed].

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

133



THE MALTESE ARCHIPELAGO FROM THE AIR
In left foreground the islet of Filfla.

[facing P. 40]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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516

MALTESE WOMEN IN FALDETTAS
[See pp. 28–29.]

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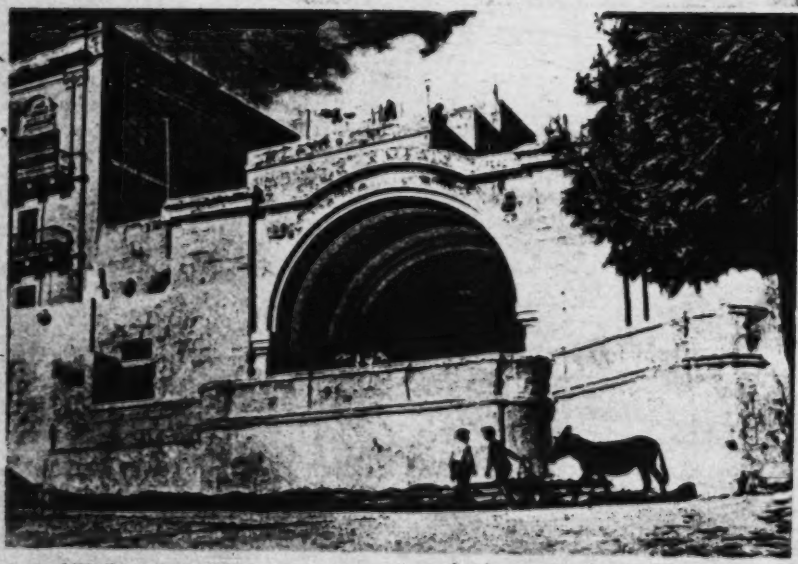
341
643



MNARJA RACES: THE GRAND MASTER'S (NOW THE GOVERNOR'S) BOX BELOW MDINA
[See pp. 27–28.]

[facing P. 41]
[pp. 41-48 not processed]

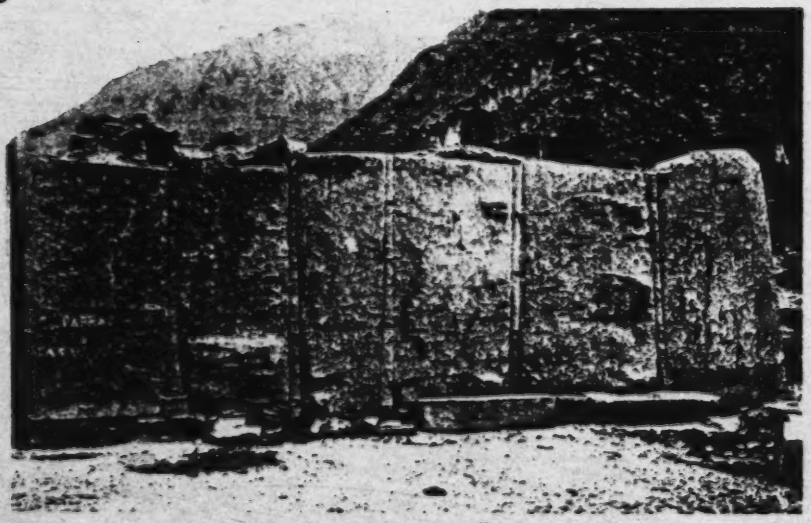
9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

172

TARXIEN: MONOLITHS IN SECOND TEMPLE

[See p. 34]

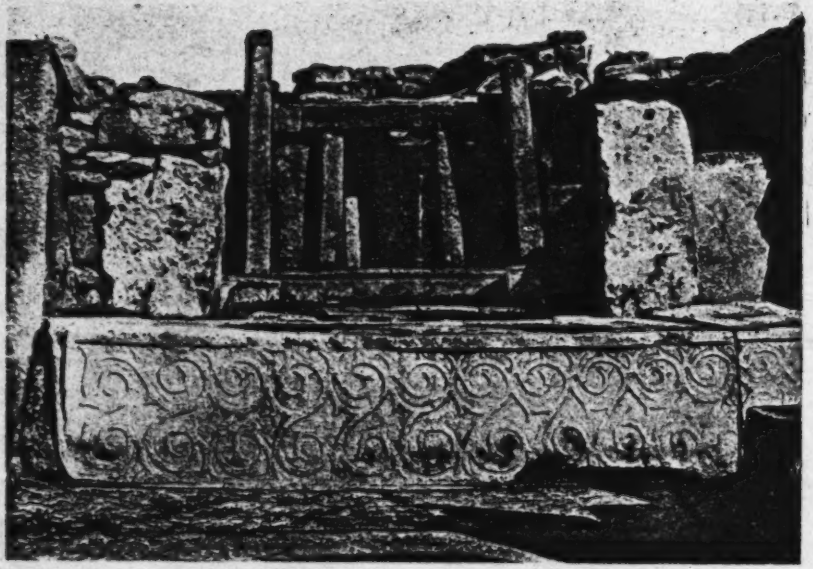
MONOLITHS IN INCA CITADEL OF OLLANTAY-TAMPU, PERU



[facing P. 48]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

172



TARXIEN: FRIEZE AND AN ALTAR

[See pp. 33-35]

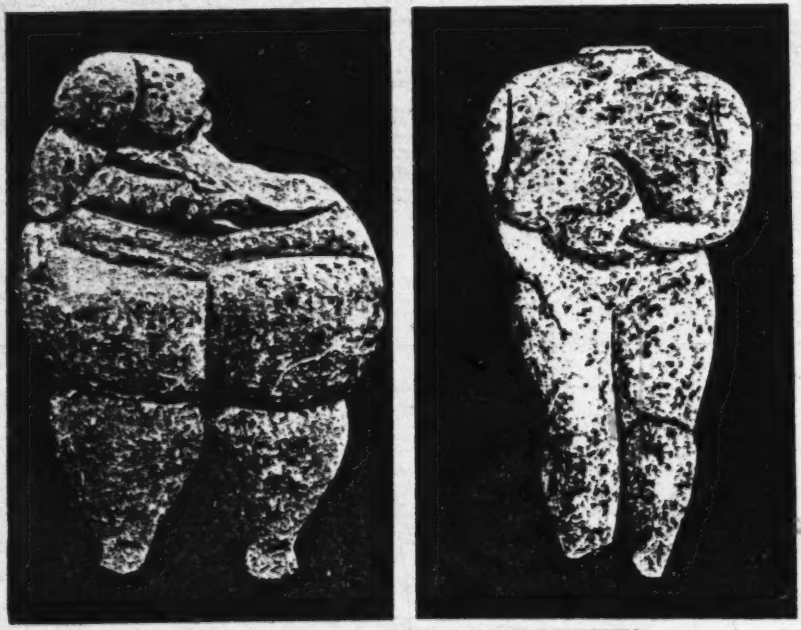
TEMPLE OF HAĠIAR QIM: MAIN APSE

Filfla in background.

[facing P-49, (A)]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

172



STONE AGE STATUETTES OF FAT DIVINITIES

The figure on the right is known as the "Venus of Malta."

[*See p.* 34.]

STONE AGE CART-TRACKS, SHOWING CROSS-ROADS AND JUNCTIONS

[*See pp.* 32–33.]

[facing p. 49, (B)]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

RECUMBENT FEMALE DEITY FROM THE HYPOGEUM

TWO DETACHABLE HEADS OF FAT DEITIES

FAT FEMALE DEITY FROM HAĠIAR QIM
[See p. 34.]

[facing P. 49, (C)]

[pp. 49-55 not processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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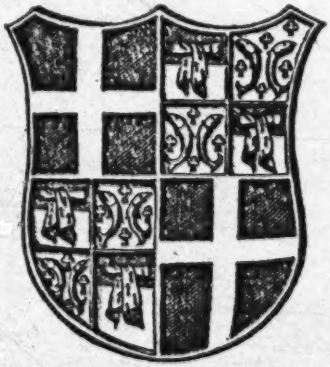
As regards the ecclesiastical buildings, it is permissible to regret the disappearance of all but one or two—the most notable survivor is Zejtun's "Old Parish Church" of S. Gregory—of the modest mediæval village churches, swept away to make room for the spacious, florid Baroque shrines that now raise their towers and domes high above the flat roofs of the casals. But we stand amazed at the architectural effort and achievement of the Knights in Malta in the days of their Order's greatness. Justly could they have said with Wren, "*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*"

186



Arms of G. M. de L'Isle Adam above the Burial-place of his Entrails in Ta Ġiezu Church, Rabat

[pp. 57-69 not processed. Plates facing pp. 64 and 65 have been processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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THE PALACE, VALETTA

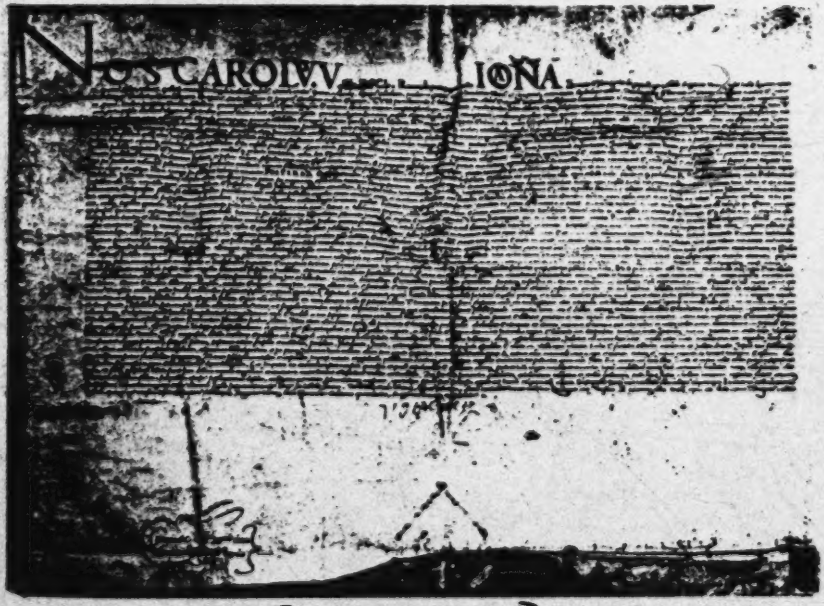
[See p. 58]

64

GRANT OF MALTA TO THE KNIGHTS OF S. JOHN BY THE EMPEROR CHARLES V

[See p. 46.]

175



[facing P. 64]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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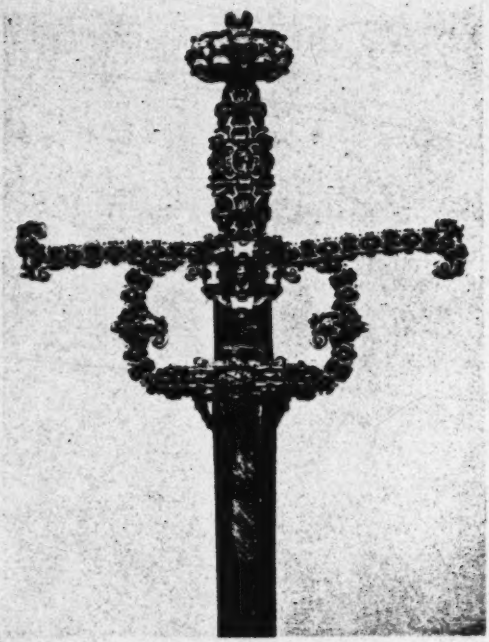
648



JEWELLED HILT OF SWORD GIVEN BY PHILIP II TO GRAND MASTER LA VALETTE
In the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
[*See pp.* 51–52.]

CRYPT OF S. JOHN'S
The tomb of La Valette is in the niche on the left.
[*See pp.* 53–54.]

341
764
531

[facing P. 65]

[pp. 65-67 Not processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

hors-d'œuvres": of the rich mass of material available on the subject, which is all that the modest authoress allows herself to claim for her work.

Equally indispensable for the effect on Valetta, and Malta generally, of the Second World War is the admirably produced *Report to accompany the Outline Plan for the Region of Valletta and the Three Cities*, prepared for the Government of Malta by Austen St B. Harrison and R. Pearce Hubbard and published by that Government in 1945. Useful also is Hugh Braun's *Works of Art in Malta: Losses and Survivals in the War*, published by His Majesty's Stationery Office in 1946. The architecture of Malta during the period of the Order is fully dealt with in Dr Quentin Hughes's workmanlike study *The Building of Malta, 1530–1795*, published in 1956 by Tiranti.

Arms of the Anglo-Bavarian League

[pp. 69–109 of text not processed. Plates facing pp. 80, 81, 96, 97, 104 and 105 have been processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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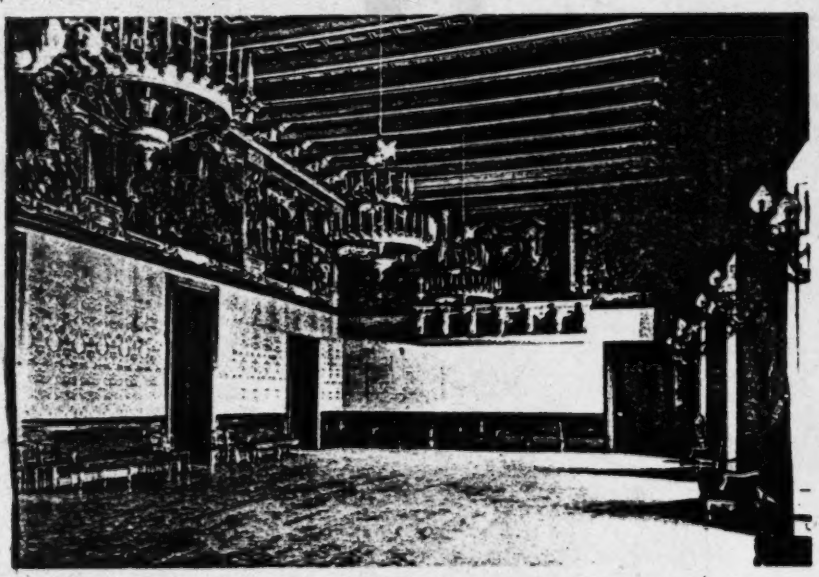
35



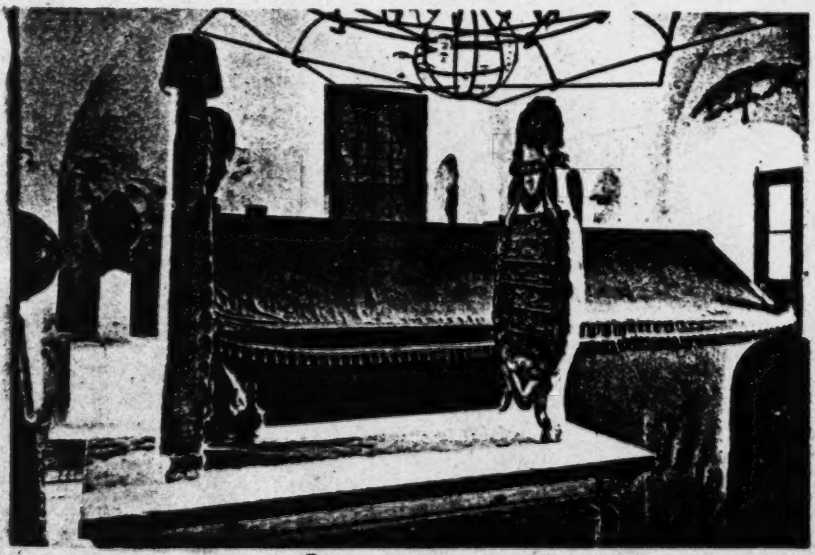
HALL OF S. MICHAEL AND S. GEORGE, SHOWING FRESCOES OF THE GREAT SIEGE AND MUSICIANS' GALLERY FROM THE GREAT CARRACK OF RHODES

[*See pp.* 48–49, 52 *and* 181.]

TOMB OF DRAGUT IN TRIPOLI (BARBARY)

[*See p.* 53.]

800



[facing P. 80]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

341
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VALETTA: AUBERGE DE CASTILE

[See p. 60.]

MAIN ROOM OF THE AUBERGE DE PROVENCE (NOW THE MALTA NATIONAL MUSEUM) WHEN USED AS THE COFFEE-ROOM OF THE UNION CLUB

[See pp. 60 and 63.]

352
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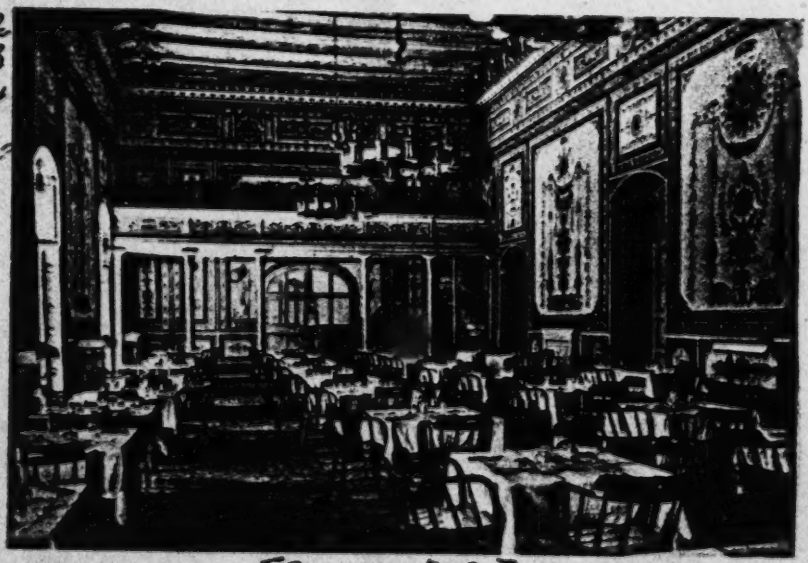
344



[facing P. 81]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

344
743

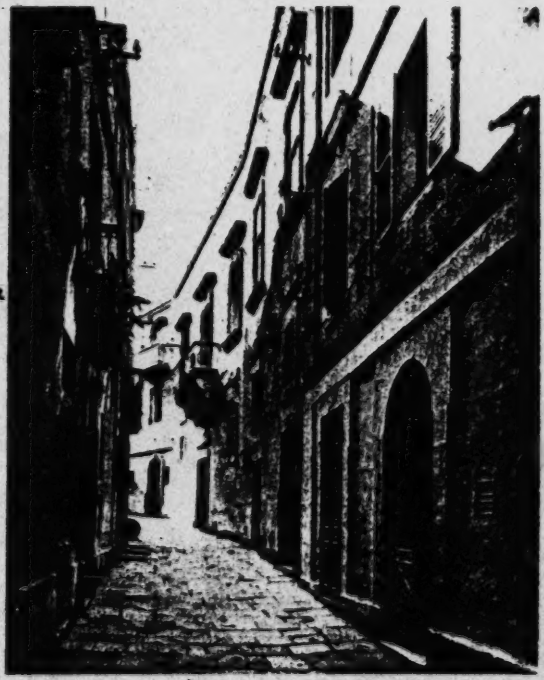
SACRED INFIRMARY: PART OF LONG WARD AFTER REMOVAL OF PARTITION WALL

[See pp. 66 and 141.]

363
342

AUBERGE OF ENGLAND AND HOUSE OF SIR OLIVER STARKEY, VITTORIOSA (BIRGU)

[See pp. 69 and 140.]



96

[facing P. 96]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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133
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MDINA, "THE NOTABLE CITY"
In the background Mosta, with its domed church.
[*See pp. 90 and 203.*]

THE CATHEDRAL, MDINA, FLOODLIT FOR THE JUBILEE OF KING GEORGE V
[*See p. 88.*]

346
341

[facing P. 97]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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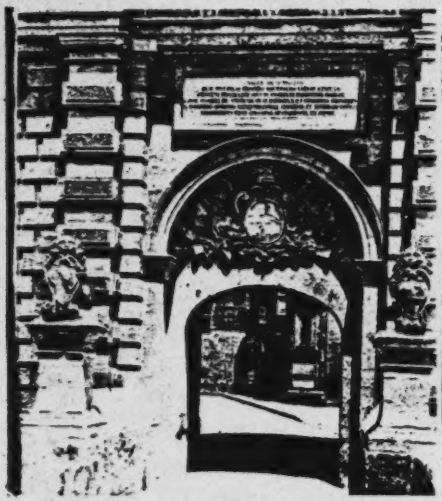
333



MAIN GATE INTO MDINA, WITH ARMS OF GRAND MASTER MANOEL DE VILHENA

[See p. 89.]

INSIDE OF SAME, WITH ARMS OF INGUANEZ FAMILY

[See p. 92.]

THE LATE BARONESS INGUANEZ ALIGHTING FROM HER OLD FAMILY CALÈCHE, MDINA

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493
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373

[facing P. 104, (A)]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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175

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAND MASTER'S HABIT

G.M. Vasconcellos

G.M. de Vilhena
(with Stoc and Pilier)

[facing P.104, (B)]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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292
175

G.M. Hompesch

Emperor Paul of Russia as Grand Master

[facing P. 104, (C)]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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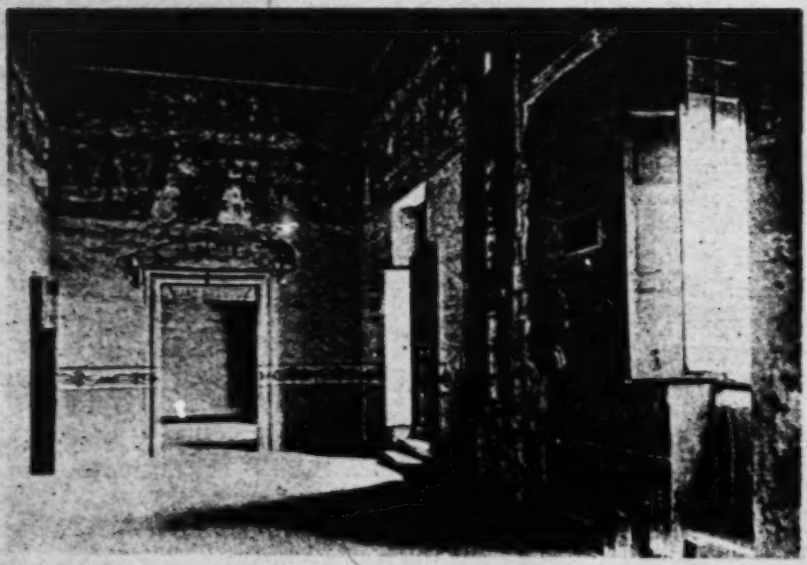
352
353



A ROOM IN THE INQUISITOR'S PALACE, VITTORIOSA, BEFORE AND AFTER RESTORATION

[See pp. 99 and 140.]

[facing P. 105]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

ears, a share of their own cosmopolitan culture, of their own standards of civilized life and manners.

They also, it would appear, taught the Maltese how to cook if the origin of some of the more savoury Maltese dishes—*imbuljuta* and *zalzett*, *pastizzi* and *kuskusu*, has been correctly ascribed to the kitchens of the Grand Masters' palaces and Auberges of the Knights. One island speciality has even made its way into the *haute cuisine* of Europe as the perfect accompaniment of boiled turbot and similar fish. It is *Sauce Maltaise*—a *Hollandaise* encarnadined and additionally flavoured with the juice and finely shredded peel of the blood-orange, which can be of a deeper red in Malta than anywhere else in the world.

Arms of the Order of S. John

[pp. 111–119 of Text have not been processed. Plates facing p. 112, and 113 have been processed].

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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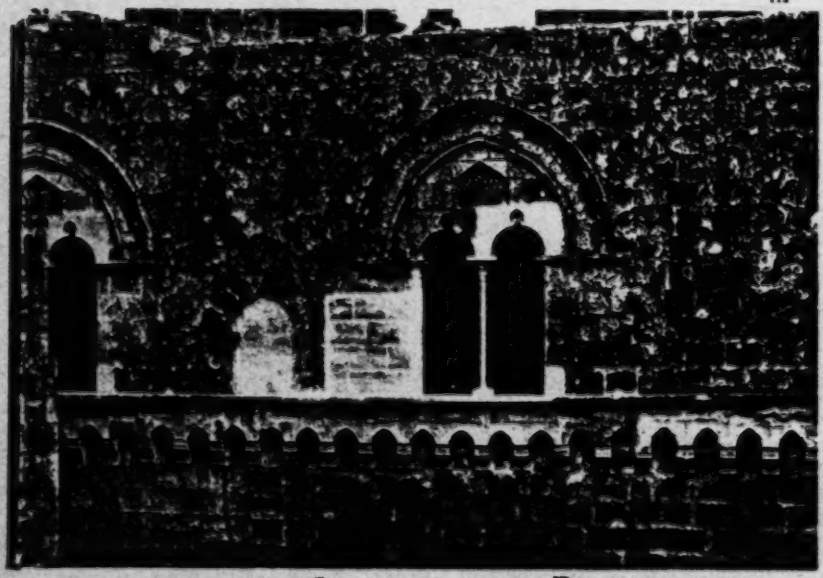
341
333

WALL OF GATTO-MURINA PALACE, MDINA, BEFORE AND AFTER RESTORATION

Observe the lamprey (*murina*) on arcade and arch.

[*See pp.* 93 *and* 141.]



[facing p. 112]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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SICULO-NORMAN WINDOW, VITTORIOSA, BEFORE AND AFTER RESTORATION
[See p. 141.]

[facing p. 113]
[pp. 113- 119 not processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

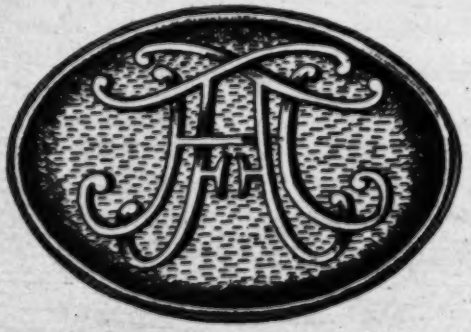
000 would have survived Tommasi as well. He died at Montpellier, a destitute and lonely exile, in May 1805, six months after the Emperor Napoleon had confirmed the annual pension of 300,000 francs which General Bonaparte had undertaken to pay him in 1798 by the Convention of the capitulation of Valetta.

Henry Harland closes one of his short stories with the reflection that while all good things come to him who waits, they sometimes come to him too late, and sometimes may come too early. True, no doubt; but the former is probably the commoner misfortune. At all events, the change in his luck came too late for poor Hompesch. When he died there was no money for the doctors or for the cost of the funeral, and he was buried by the Confraternity of the Blue Penitents of Montpellier under the altar of their chapel, in a plain unpainted coffin of soft wood. No inscription marked his obscure resting-place.[1]

He was spared the irony that it should bear his family's haughty motto: "*Frangor nec flector*—I may be broken, but I cannot be bent."

[1] *Cf.* De Villeneuve-Bargemont, *Monuments des Grands-Maîtres de l'Ordre de St Jean* (Paris, 1829, vol. ii, p. 322). One of Hompesch's personal standards is preserved in the Armoury of the Tower of London. Another is at St John's Gate.

186



Monogram of G. M. Hompesch
From the mantelpiece of his bedroom (now the Governor's Office) in the Palace.

[PP. 121-141 of text have not been processed. plates facing PP. 128, and 129 have been processed].

9: Luke C-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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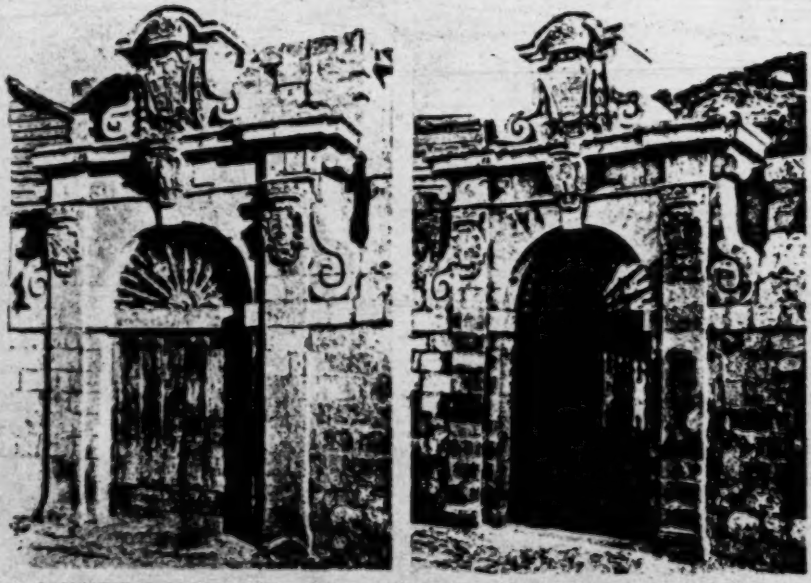
BALCONY OF THE RESTORED BONDI PALACE, GOZO, FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO THE CITADEL
[See pp. 141–142 and 222.]

341
333



A MONTE DI REDENZIONE GATEWAY NEAR KALAMISTRA, BEFORE AND AFTER RECONDITIONING
[See p. 141.]

[facing P. 128]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

342
352
353

NAVE OF S. JOHN'S, VALETTA, WITH ITS TAPESTRIES DISPLAYED
[See pp. 177–180.]

BEHEADING OF S. JOHN THE BAPTIST, BY CARAVAGGIO, IN THE ORATORY OF S. JOHN'S, VALETTA
[See pp. 242–243.]

532

[facing p. 129]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

masons have found it possible to comply with a suggestion of mine that the two originals should be pieced together and replaced, for the sake of continuity, in their original position.

Also, as regards the handsome carved stone balcony, crumbling fragments of the original balcony were found in sufficient quantity to make it possible for the entire design to be reconstituted.

The Bondi Palace, thus saved from disappearance, is destined to be the Museum of Gozo.

The British Royal Arms: 1801–16
From the early numbers of "The Malta Government Gazette"

[pp. 143-196 of text not processed. Plates facing pp. 144, 145, 160, 161, 192 and 193 have been processed].

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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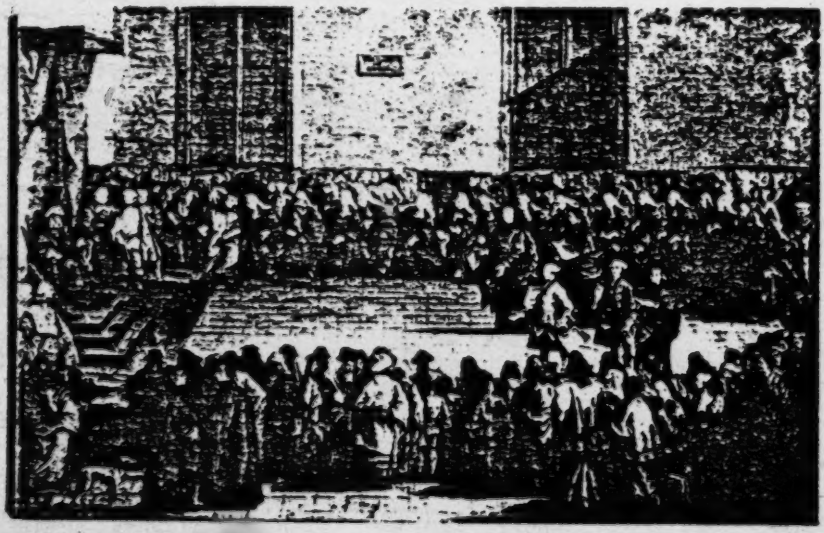
353

THE PALACE, VALETTA: A CORNER OF THE TAPESTRY CHAMBER (FORMERLY THE COUNCIL CHAMBER)

[See pp. 182 and 184-186.]

532



DEPUTATION OF THE PATRICIATE OF UDINE ARGUING BEFORE G.M. PINTO AND HIS CHAPTER-GENERAL IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE PALACE, VALETTA

By Giambattista Tiepolo.

[See pp. 181-182.]

144

[facing p. 144]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

532

CARDINAL FREDERICK, LANDGRAVE OF HESSE, GENERAL OF THE GALLEYS
In the Palace, Valetta. Dated 1644.
[*See p.* 183.]

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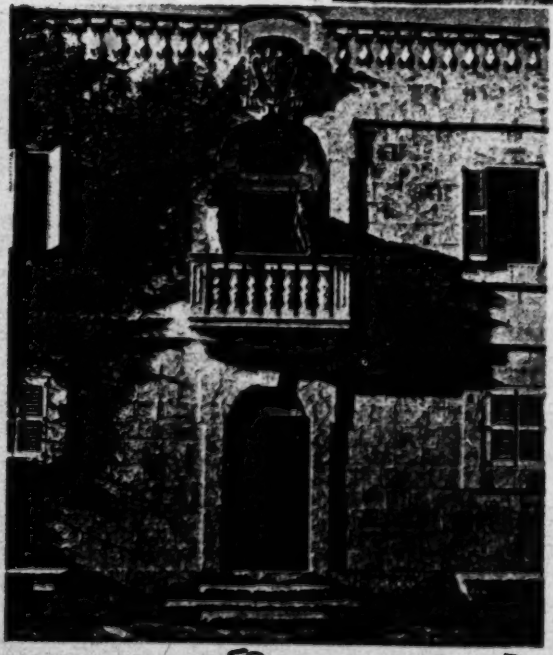
341



ENTRANCE TO THE INQUISITOR'S SUMMER PALACE
[*See pp.* 100–101.]

[facing P. 145]
[pp. 145-168 Not processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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793

BUST OF G.M. CARDINAL DE VERDALLE
[See p. 190.]

VERDALA CASTLE
[See pp. 187-191.]

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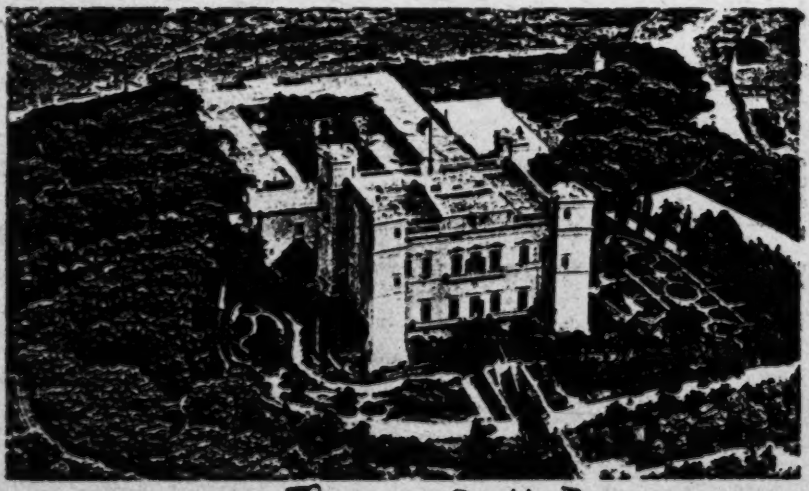

[Facing P. 160]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

351

IN THE GARDEN OF CASA LEONI (DAR IL-LYUNI)
[See pp. 191–193.]

GRILLE OF WELL IN THE PALACE, VALETTA
[See p. 181.]

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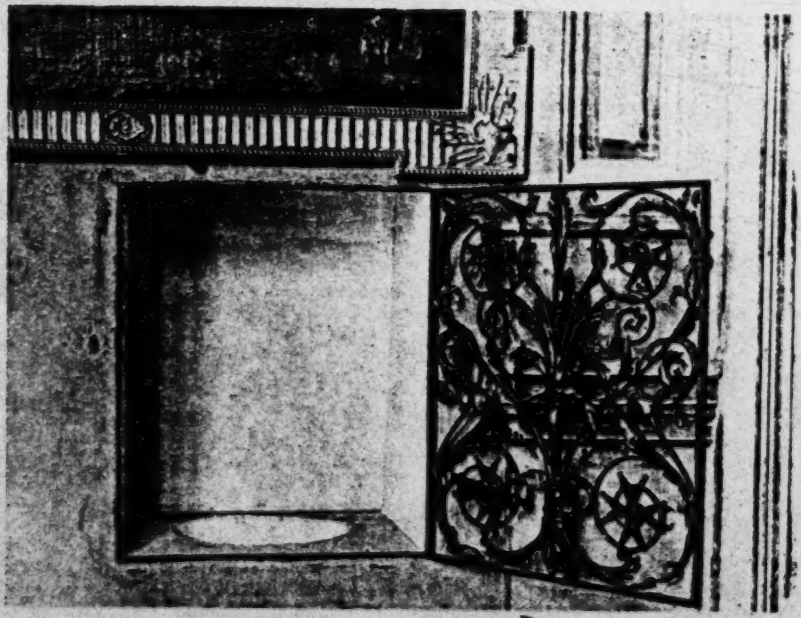

[facing P. 161]
[pp. 161-192 Not processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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346

QUEEN SQUARE AND THE ROYAL LIBRARY, VALETTA

[See pp. 199–200.]

796
363
342

A PROCESSION EMERGING FROM S. JOHN'S

STREET IN SIĠĠIEWI

Note the "fat" mouldings.

[See p 67.]

[facing P. 192]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

341
251

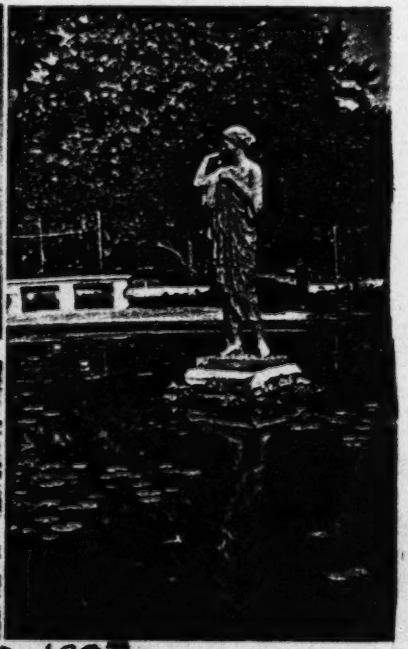
OPENING ONE OF THE GRANARIES, FLORIANA
[See p. 217.]

185

SOUL IN PURGATORY
[See p. 205.]

IN A MALTESE GARDEN
[See p. 104.]

532



[facing p. 193]
[pp. 193-196 not processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

more outstanding examples, in Bulletin No. 1 of the Malta Institute of Historical Research by Sir Hannibal Scicluna, whose name is almost synonymous with that of the Library he so long and enthusiastically directed. Other "classifications" comprise the minutes of the Council of the Order,

Arms of Devalbelle Latour

the Council of State, Chapter-General and the Congregation of War, the Chancery registers, the records of the Order's Commanderies abroad, ecclesiastical affairs, the Inquisition, the administration of the Sacred Infirmary and of the Navy, the affairs of the several Langues. They include, in short, the multifarious matters with which a body that was not only a quasi-military, quasi-religious, militant and Hospitaller organization with property in every country in Christendom, but also the ruler of islands set in the midst of all the cross-currents of Europe, could be expected to be concerned. One interesting "classification" also includes Papal Bulls concerning two other Crusading Orders—the Teutonic Knights, who still exist, and the Knights Templar, whose dramatic

[pp. 198-201 of text not processed.]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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CHAPTER XVII

Casals and Countryside

OWING TO THE DENSITY AND RAPID GROWTH OF THE population, to the lack of soil and to the abundance of excellent building-stone, which not only takes on in the course of ages a beautiful patina but is easy to work, the proportion of Malta's built-up area to the area under cultivation is probably uniquely high. Unique is probably also the "Red Soil Law" whereby anyone about to erect a house is compelled to dig up and hand over to the Government (which removes it for him) any soil there may be on the site of the future structure, so that the precious earth may not be buried and lost for ever to the island's cultivators.

So precious is it that the smallest pockets, however inaccessibly they may be situated, are jealously conserved. Malta is low-lying—in the words of Tasso

giace Malta fra l'onde occulta, e bassa

—and only on the thyme-covered cliffs of the south-western stretch of coast does it rise as high as 800 feet. These cliffs are wild and rugged and sheer, but here and there, as they drop precipitously to the sea, narrow ledges of earth-covered rock cling precariously to their face. But even these *redums*, as they are termed—the like of which I have seen only on that hermit-inhabited spur of Mount Athos which is called Kerasia—are brought into use by the indomitable Maltese farmer of the locality, who sometimes lives in the caves beside them with his family and his animals as his Stone Age predecessor lived in them before him.

Thus every nook and cranny of these islands is eloquent of their past: towns; casals; little country chapels, farmhouses and isolated gateways, which are often adorned with

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

some sculptured escutcheon; the old stone *fougasses*[1] to be encountered along the coast; even the very cliffs; even tiny Comino, from whose stony fields, where is cultivated the cumin seed from which the island takes its name, there rises one of the massive square keeps which the Knights scattered throughout their territory.[2]

The casals are, as has been said in an earlier chapter, not villages, but compact stone townships of tall houses and narrow streets, solidly built in good substantial Baroque architecture. Their outskirts, as likely as not, are dignified with some ancient country-house concealed behind high walls amid charming gardens—the beauty and seclusion of the Maltese gardens are justly proverbial—while the focus of the casal, both literally and metaphorically, is the parish church. This is generally a great Baroque pile of golden sandstone flanked by two massive towers, but an exception is the Parish Church of Mosta, built in the classical style in the middle of the nineteenth century mainly by the efforts, both technical and financial, of the villagers themselves to the design of the ingenious Maltese architect Grognet de Vassé mentioned in Chapter II. It is topped by a dome that claims to be the third largest in the world, being surpassed in size only by those of S. Sophia in Constantinople and S. Peter's in Rome, higher internally than the dome of the Roman Pantheon and exceeding by sixteen feet the diameter of that of S. Paul's in London.

[1] Patrick Brydone (*cf.* pp. 143–147) gives an interesting account of this little-known form of coastal defence; "For we found, to our no small amazement, that the rocks were not only cut into fortifications but likewise into artillery to defend these fortifications: being hollowed out in many places into the form of immense mortars. The charge is said to be about a barrel of gunpowder, over which they place a large piece of wood, made exactly to fit the mouth of the chamber. On this they heap a great quantity of cannon balls, shells, or other deadly materials; and when an enemy's ship approaches the harbour, they fire the whole into the air: and they pretend it produces a very great effect, making a shower for two or three hundred yards round that would sink any vessel."

[2] An excellent companion for the exploration of the island is F. Weston's *Walks in Malta*, published in Valetta. Later booklets include Showell Styles, *Walks and Climbs in Malta* (Valetta, 2nd edn., 1952), and H. H. Hick, *Walks in Gozo* (Malta, 1953).

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

361 There is nothing in the rest of the Old World quite like
363 the casals of Malta. Mostly built in the seventeenth and
342 eighteenth centuries, the older parts of them consist of narrow winding streets except for the square facing the parish church. The houses, of uniform height, present a front of uninterrupted masonry, the façades broken only by the boxed balconies typical of Malta. Here and there the sculptured porticoes and elaborately decorated windows and cornices of a nobleman's mansion interrupt the simplicity of the other houses, but the streets preserve that enchanting homogeneity of period which on a larger scale distinguishes Valetta from other cities of its size. They are vernacular architecture in the fullest sense of the term. The stonework bears the lovely patina of age; any patches of garden are out of sight. In the more densely inhabited parts of the island the growth of population may bring about a confluence of two or even three casals, as in the case of Attard, Lija and Balzan.

To wander about these great stone villages by full moon or on a night lit by the illuminations and fireworks of the annual *festa* is to experience a translation in time more realistic than any suggested by stage or screen.

643 Samuel Taylor Coleridge records that it was Sir Alexander Ball's "custom to visit each casal throughout the island once, if not twice, in the course of each summer: and during my residence there I had the honour of being his constant, and most often his only, companion in these rides; to which I owe some of the happiest and most instructive hours of my life." A mid-twentieth century Governor, Sir Charles Bonham-Carter, followed with success this practice of regular weekly visits to the casals.

2

794 The Maltese are among the most devoted sons and daughters of the Roman Catholic Church. They are, men and women alike, assiduous at their public devotions; there

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

is no sacrifice they will not gladly make for the greater dignity and beauty of their churches. Take, for example, the case of Mġarr—one of the smallest and poorest of the parishes of Malta and the one most cherished by that great seaman and lover of Malta, the late Admiral Sir W. W. Fisher. Here between the two wars the inhabitants, nearly all hard-working peasants, under the enthusiastic leadership of their parish priest, Father (later Monsignor) Edgar Salomone, built a great new church by their own efforts, bringing their weekly contributions to the building fund in eggs and fowls and vegetables and whatever else they produce.

At street corners statues of saints, sometimes also of souls enveloped in a purgatorial blaze, afford them ever-present reminders, encouraging or minatory as the case may be, of the next world; in this one they love the great ecclesiastical ceremonies, particularly the processions which are one of the features of Maltese life. These assume on Good Friday something of the character of a Passion Play, with members of lay confraternities staggering along Merchants' Street in Valetta beneath the weight of life-size groups of the Passion carved with gruesome realism. I have also seen these processions in Palermo, where I have been shocked at the flippancy and irreverence not so much of the onlookers as of the actual participants. The Maltese play their parts in these functions with profound and solemn devoutness. Indeed, some of them may be bearing their burden, whatever it is, in fulfilment of a self-imposed penance, concealing their features behind a hood with eye-holes that covers the head.

But on the annual *festa*, the local saint's day, of their village they give themselves up wholeheartedly to rejoicings, which are definitely on the noisy side. For they are punctuated by the explosions of crackers, maroons and every procurable form of noise-producing apparatus, and they are illuminated by ingenious, locally made fireworks. On these days the casals are a brave sight as they fly from the top of every house of any importance the flag of

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the Grand Master who was their founder or their patron, gay with the rich heraldry and colouring of the last phase of the age of chivalry. We have seen in Chapter XII that Grand Master Ferdinand von Hompesch, inglorious but Maltese-speaking and on excellent terms with the Maltese country-folk, gave one of his names and his special patronage to no fewer than three of the casals. Zabbar's subsidiary name was Città Hompesch, that of Siġġiewi Città Ferdinando, that of Żejtun Città Beland, the maiden name (Bylandt) of Hompesch's mother. Similarly, Curmi was known alternatively as Città Pinto, Żebbuġ as Città Rohan. In the cases of Senglea and Pawla the Grand Masters de la Sengle and de Paule were actually the founders.

It affords a pleasant and richly coloured glimpse into a romantic past, and happy evidence of the attachment of the Maltese to their unique historical traditions, to see the great square armorial flags of these Grand Masters in their proper tinctures waving on gala days over their casals.

July, August and September, the hottest months of the year, are Malta's *festa* season *par excellence*. At that period, and especially in August, there is an absolute orgy of what irreverent young officers are apt to call "festering," and the two islands resound from end to end with the detonations of petards and bombs. At night the parish church of whichever casal is celebrating its patronal feast is prettily illuminated, while elaborate set-pieces are displayed regardless of expense and other fireworks of a less stationary nature accomplish, or fail to accomplish, their destined trajectory. The amount spent annually by the population on fireworks and mere noise-making contrivances is positively staggering.

The first village *festa* I attended—I had arrived in Malta in the month of August—was in one of the smaller, more remote and more rustic casals. The church bells were clanging with no attempt at rhythm; rockets and Roman candles were going off in rapid succession in all directions; Catharine-wheels were rotating around one; the noise was

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

almost as varied and barbaric as at the Holy Fire in Jerusalem. 527
During the rare pauses between the bangs of the explosives and the splutterings of the pyrotechnical diversions one was just able to catch the sound of the chanting of an ecclesiastical procession, faintly audible reminder that the excuse for all this sound was a religious anniversary.

Nor was this by any means all. In an open space outside 527
the village a band was trying in the face of considerable 533
difficulties to play a secular air from some opera, all the bandsmen dressed in what might at a distance have passed for a naval Commander's white uniform, with aiguillettes of yellow cord. All, that is to say, except the *maestro*, whom I still see in my mind's eye as an elderly, worn-out, languid, apathetic cynic in a drooping Panama hat, with a cigarette hanging limply from his lower lip. Two hundred yards away another band was competing with an entirely different tune. Not that it mattered in the least. Nobody was paying the slightest attention to the music; and, even if they had been, neither band had a hope of making its output prevail over the other component parts of the general din.

Likewise do I recall a *festa* in Gozo, where the band, in this case not in uniform, was playing as it marched round the village square. But it afforded the pleasant sight of a man in a brown Homburg hat nonchalantly beating with his right hand the big drum which was being carried fore and aft by two small boys, while fanning himself with his music, which he held in his left.

These particular bands were professionals hired for the 533
occasion, for the villages in question were not large enough 665
to possess bands of their own. But in the large casals the band is a local institution of far wider significance than the specifically musical. Next to the parish church it is probably the most important social nucleus of the township, and influential personages regard it as a distinction to be offered the patronage or honorary Presidency of its organization. It may have even a political connotation. In the towns which

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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533 665 are populous enough to run to two bands these will as likely as not be identified with the opposing political parties.

3

357 No book about Malta, no chapter making mention of the country people, would be complete without reference to a class of Maltese largely drawn from the country-folk. In these days, when domestic service is shunned by potential employees and thought of more as a myth than as something that once existed by would-be employers, it is my pleasant duty to record that Maltese servants can be among the best in the world. Such, at all events, has been my experience and that of many of my friends in Malta. Where employer and employee have been able to establish a relationship of mutual esteem and respect (and few people are more ready to respond in this way than the Maltese domestic), the employer in Malta may confidently count not only upon receiving from members of the household staff faithful, efficient and loyal service but upon retaining, if he or she is only a sojourner in the island, their affectionate regard long after he or she has left its shores.

It is, however, regrettable but necessary to add that since these words were first written domestic servants are tending to become as rare in Malta as they are elsewhere.

114 357 Shortly after the First World War a gentleman named Eric Shepherd came to Malta as Professor of English Literature at the University, and remained there for three years. On his experiences during those three years Mr Shepherd subsequently wrote a book called *Malta and Me*,[1] which abounds in puckish humour and flashes of insight and is often extremely entertaining.

But partly because of its puckishness, partly because the author laid what might appear to some to be excessive emphasis on such drawbacks to life as may exist in Malta

[1] Selwyn and Blount, 1926.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

133

S. PAUL'S ISLAND
[*See pp.* 21, 87 *and* 213.]

SELMUN PALACE
[*See p.* 213.]

341
344

[facing p. 208]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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(and where do they not exist?), his book gave a certain amount of offence in the more sensitive quarters of the island. None the less, it includes a chapter which should have atoned for any "causes of stumbling" created in those quarters. The chapter is entitled "Dolores" and concerns the Shepherds' Maltese maid-of-all-work and their baby's nurse. "Dolores" is not only a telling tribute to some of the salient virtues of the Maltese character; it is one of the most sensitive and moving descriptions of the personal devotion of a servant to her employers and her charge that I have had the good fortune to read.

4

A word has been said earlier in this chapter as to the grandeur of the cliff scenery of Malta. Inland, on the other hand, the countryside can scarcely be called either grand or impressive, and during the dry summer months there is little colour to set against the brown aridity of the fields other than the sage of the olive, the carob and the fig-trees, and the pinks and whites of the oleanders beside the roads. But after the autumn rains have begun to refresh the parched earth the land rapidly assumes a mantle of young green, and the wild flowers appear shyly above ground, beginning with two lovely miniature blooms—the brilliantly blue *Iris minuta* and the even more ethereal, strongly scented "*satarina*" (*N. serotinus*). This, the tiniest of the narcissi, looks as if it had been called into being by a touch of the fairy's wand in Walt Disney's *Fantasia*.

Later, in March and April, Malta and Gozo alike seem to glow with the crimson, deepening into purple, of the *sulla*, the clover or sainfoin with which thousands of acres are sown for fodder. Among the most striking blends of colour are those produced by many varieties of Bougainvillæa (which flourishes exceedingly in Malta) and the purple-and-cream flowers of the wild caper, against the background of the rich gold of the fortifications.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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172

ROMAN INSCRIPTION RELATING TO THE *MUNICIPIUM* OF GOZO IN OUTER WALL OF CITADEL
[*See p.* 224.]

133

CLIFFS OF TA ĊENĊ, GOZO
[*See p.* 220.]

172

MAIMUNA'S TOMBSTONE
[*See p.* 224.]

[facing p. 209]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Classical authors as well as travellers of the Renaissance and later ages have praised Malta's fertility, the quality of its corn, its fruit, its linen and its cotton,[1] the sweet scent of its roses,[2] the delicate aroma of the wild thyme that flavours its honey. Cicero, in fact, called Malta a land of honey and roses, and it was being described in similar terms nearly two thousand years later. "The fruits are of exquisite flavour," wrote Dr Meryon, Lady Hester Stanhope's sorely tried physician, companion and biographer. "Flowers are very fine, and I could not help fancying the roses more fragrant than in my own country. Malta honey is highly esteemed." Elsewhere the Doctor remarks that "no people are more attached to their country than the Maltese to their barren rock"; and it is natural enough that the Maltese of to-day should like to refer to their island as "the flower of the world."

This phrase, if held to refer solely to scenery and vegetation, might appear to some to verge on the excessive. If it be taken to apply to the many-sidelines of Malta's interest and amenities it does not lack justification.

[1] During the era of sailing-ships Malta, and especially the casal of Zebbug, produced a heavy cotton sail-cloth which earned a wide reputation and was exported all over Europe.

[2] The name Attard, the charming old casal half-way between Hamrun and Mdina, means "the village of roses."

Arms of G. M. Manoel de Vilhena

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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CHAPTER XVIII

Old Survivals in Modern Malta

MALTA OCCUPIES A PLACE OF ITS OWN IN THE OLD WORLD not only by reason of the length and unusual character of its annals, not only by reason of the tremendous range of its architectural monuments. It does so because it combines with these features the circumstance that it is the home of a separate race, the smallest of European peoples.

There are, it is true, four independent states in Europe of lesser size than Malta, but the inhabitants of these states do not form distinct racial stocks, nor have they their own languages. The Maltese are the smallest nation with the longest history, and their islands are a microcosm, self-contained. Not only has Malta its own tongue. It has its own University—the oldest in the British Commonwealth Overseas and granted the Royal patronage and the prefix "Royal" by King George VI in his coronation year—with seven faculties: Theology, Laws, Medicine and Surgery, Dental Surgery, Engineering and Architecture, Arts, Science. It has, as we have seen, its own Nobility with their Committee of Privileges. It is an ecclesiastical Province whose Archbishop exercises jurisdiction since 1944 over the bishopric of Gozo, previously immediately subject to the Holy See since its formation in 1864. And in the history of this microcosm has been mirrored the life of the great world around it.

Viewed as a part of the British Commonwealth, Malta is unique in two particulars. It is the only British possession whose Government owns an Opera House and in normal times maintains an annual opera season and conducts the pawnbroking of the nation in the manner of certain Continental states.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

000 states. Alone with Gibraltar it runs a Lotto (with weekly
659 drawings) as a Government Department. Until 1866 Malta's
525 Opera House was the Manoel Theatre, a little gem of a play-
368 house built as the Court Theatre by Grand Master Manoel
de Vilhena in 1731 and believed to be the oldest theatre in
368 Europe. It is easy enough to appreciate how daintily graceful
545 it must have looked when the audience, arrayed in the
brocades and perukes of the eighteenth century, was
assembled to witness some comedy of Molière or Goldoni.
Later used as a cinema, it is now being scientifically restored
to its original form and purpose.

368 In 1866 the new Opera House, officially called the Theatre
Royal, was completed at a cost of £60,000 just within
Kingsgate, partly on the site of a dilapidated old bakery which
has been identified with the house of the Turcopilier, title
of the Pillar or Head of the Langue of England. In 1873
this building, which was designed by Barry, the architect of
the Covent Garden Theatre, in a style which while dignified
was entirely out of harmony with Valetta's prevailing archi-
tectural character, was seriously damaged by fire and was
reconstructed at a farther cost of £20,000. Before its
destruction in the Second World War it was the only theatre
known to the writer where it was the rule for male members
of the audience to attend the evening performances either in
mess dress or in evening dress with decorations.

655 The Monte di Pietà, the Government pawnbroking
175 Department, was established at the end of the sixteenth
century and was housed in its present handsome office in
Merchants' Street by Ximenes, the last but two of Malta's
Grand Masters. Connected with the Monte di Pietà is an
institution known as the Monte di Redenzione. In wander-
ing about the island the visitor will occasionally encounter
a building of the seventeenth or eighteenth century adorned
with a shield representing three cones surmounted by the
letter "R". These buildings constitute the property, now
administered by the Government of Malta under a trust, of

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the Monte di Redenzione, a foundation established more than three hundred years ago by one Father Rafael, a Maltese Capuchin.

Preaching one day in the year 1607 in S. John's Conventual Church, this good friar called upon his hearers to inaugurate a fund for the redemption of the Christian captives of the Barbary States, whose sufferings he depicted in terms of such realism that the Grand Master, Alof de Wignacourt, was able to set up the Monte di Redenzione with the offerings of the congregation and of members of the Order. Later, other charitable persons added or made bequests to the fund, which at first paid a ransom of 70 scudi for each Maltese slave and 150 scudi for a Knight of the Order. Subsequently these rates were raised to 200 and 500 scudi respectively; but, as the wars between the Order and the Barbary States ceased and the latter discontinued their raids on the island, the original object of the trust came to be fulfilled. So its properties were combined with those of the Monte di Pietà and administered by the Order, and thus continue to be administered to the present day by the Malta Government.

The most important property of the Monte di Redenzione is Selmun Castle, which stands on a high eminence overlooking S. Paul's Island and S. Paul's Bay. It is a clumsy replica of Verdala but is none the less impressive with its four towers and general air of a mediæval fortified stronghold. A balcony that completely encircles the castle, towers and all, is a pleasing feature of a building which might otherwise seem heavy and lacking in the gracefulness which Verdala, vast as it is, possesses in so marked a degree. Another attractive little property of the Redenzione is a handsome armorial ornamented gateway of the reign of Grand Master Pinto, standing below Selmun near the junction of the main road between S. Paul's Bay and Mellieha and the track to Kalamistra.

In his wanderings, especially in the country districts, the

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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346 692 778

In his wanderings, especially in the country districts, the visitor will likewise notice, let into the external walls of churches, small marble slabs bearing the inscription:

NON GODE
L'IMMUNITÀ
ECCLESIASTICA

The tablets meant that the churches and chapels in question did not enjoy the right of ecclesiastical sanctuary, and their explanation lay in the fact that until well after the beginning of the nineteenth century the Ecclesiastical Courts in Malta exercised temporal jurisdiction over the clergy. It followed that their jurisdiction extended over all consecrated buildings, in which the civil authority was unable to exercise its functions.

778 346 692 656

The next stage was reached when lay criminals sought refuge in these "extra-territorial" churches from the arm of the civil law. When the abuse tended to become serious the ecclesiastical authorities sought to minimize it by affixing the notice in question to various rural churches with the object of confining the right of sanctuary to the churches on which the inscription did not appear. But the right, even thus restricted, had clearly become an anachronism dangerous to the peace and good order of the country, and no longer tolerable. So in 1828 it was completely abolished by Governor Ponsonby by means of a Proclamation, whose preamble declares that:

> In consequence of certain privileges or immunities heretofore claimed as belonging to divers churches and other holy edifices and places in these islands, wicked and profligate men have often been tempted to commit murders, robberies and other atrocious crimes in the hope of escaping punishment by taking refuge in such places.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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If the Church in Malta thus lost its right of granting asylum, its Head acquired at an even earlier stage of the British occupation another right which is carefully preserved to the present day. In 1801 Major-General Pigot, then in charge of the administration and in command of the troops, issued the following Standing Order to the "Garrison of La Valette and its Dependencies":

> His Eminence the Bishop of Malta is to receive from all guards honour due to a Brigadeer [*sic*] General.

When, after the First World War, the rank of Brigadier-General was abolished, the Archbishop of Malta was promoted, from the point of view of military compliments, to be a Major-General; and the guard never fails to turn out to him every day that he crosses the Palace Square.

It is sometimes said that the privilege was granted in recognition of the military services of Bishop Francis Xavier Caruana, who as Canon Caruana played a leading rôle in the rising against the French in 1798–1800. But this story is picturesque rather than probable, seeing that the salute to the Bishop was ordered in 1801 and Canon Caruana did not become Bishop of Malta until thirty years later. Its origin lay no doubt in the wish of the Occupying Power to demonstrate in a public manner its respect for the Church of Malta and its Head.

For the Roman Catholic Church is in Malta by law established; its canon law is, as in Quebec, the law of the land. It follows that contact between Church and State is close, and this contact is not confined, on the part of the representatives of the State, to relations with the hierarchy but is maintained equally with the parish clergy. The link finds its formal and public expression on the 2nd February of each year, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the ceremony of Candlemas, the "Candelora." On the morning of this day all the parish priests, wearing their best cassocks, repair to the Palace in Valetta, and one

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

795 by one, as the names of their parishes are called out, advance
659 to the Governor's throne and present to him a large and
796 heavy wax candle, generally embellished with painted decorations.

This Candlemas ceremony has been maintained uninterruptedly from the days when the State was the Order of S. John; and the Governor takes this occasion, as did his predecessors the Grand Masters, to address the assembly on the problems of the day, with particular emphasis on the manner in which Church and State can best co-operate for the benefit of the people. It gives the Governor of Malta the same sort of opportunity, *mutatis mutandis*, to make public pronouncements on matters of policy as the British Prime Minister is given at the Lord Mayor's Banquet. A collation brings this happy and useful function to a close.

Here it may be added that the Governor retains, as the successor of the Grand Masters, certain ecclesiastical patronage, such as the nomination to the post of Dean of the Cathedral Chapter of Malta and the right of presentation to various benefices. A survival of another sort from the days of the Knights is the religious corporation known as the Collegiate Church of S. Paul's Grotto at Rabat, whose Canons still wear at their ceremonies the habit, *stolone* and cross of the Order.

241' The principal industry of the Maltese islands is agriculture,
433 and the Maltese, despite the stony nature of their land, are skilful and industrious farmers with a wonderful knack of extracting the utmost from the soil, despite methods necessarily somewhat primitive since their fields are too small for modern agricultural machinery. Maltese potatoes and Maltese oranges have a high reputation. Vegetables are good, especially tomatoes; wheat does well where there
[439] is room to grow it. But the islands can produce only a fraction of their annual consumption of cereals, and much
251 has therefore to be imported from outside. Among the most
178 familiar features surviving from the era of the Knights are

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the underground granaries, shaped like vast jars, beneath the open space between Valetta and its suburb of Floriana and beneath a few other places, sealed with round stone lids and still in use for conserving Malta's stocks of imported grain.

There are other links in Malta with the rule of the Order of S. John. There survives, for example, from the days of the Grand Masters an official known as the Consul for Goldsmiths and Silversmiths, who is the appraiser of the Government and impresses on Maltese silver its own hall-mark, the Maltese Cross, and on gold the crown or the Maltese shield. The Consul's office is housed on the ground-floor of the Monte di Pietà building in Merchants' Street. Opposite to it is the handsome Public Registry, with a tablet commemorating its reconstruction by Grand Master Zondadari. As if to compensate for the defacement by the French Revolutionaries of the Sienese Grand Master's escutcheon, his inscription was subsequently surmounted by a bust of George III, topped by the Royal Arms of that day.

In connexion with the Consul for Goldsmiths and Silversmiths it may be mentioned that the coinage of the Order remained legal tender in Malta until 1886, when by a Government Notice there were called in all coins of "the late Government of the Order of S. John of Jerusalem." [1] The principal denominations of the Maltese coinage were the scudo, the tari, the carlino and the grano or grain, which in Maltese were called *skut*, *rbighi*, *karlin* and *habba*; and not only the country people but all Maltese use to this day the old names to denote certain values in our modern coinage. Thus 2½*d.* is described as *tliet karlinijet* (three carlini); half a crown as *tmintax rbighi*, meaning eighteen tari; 1*s.* 3*d.* is invariably *disa' rbghajja*—that is, nine tari.

Malta has no longer a separate coinage of its own, but small bronze coins of one-third of a farthing, still known locally as grains, were struck at the London Mint for use in

[1] The standard work on this interesting coinage is Canon Calleja Schembri's *Coins and Medals of the Knights of Malta* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 2nd edn., 1910).

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

436 Malta in the reigns of all the British sovereigns who have ruled in Malta from George IV to George V inclusive.

186 Let this chapter end with another survival, perhaps the most ubiquitous of all, although its origin antedates the 173 arrival of the Knights by more than four hundred years. 178 It is the red-and-white Maltese flag which is flown throughout the islands side by side with the Union Jack. Long-established tradition has it that the red and white were the colours of the Norman House of Hauteville, and that the flag and the corresponding arms are one of the legacies of Roger de Hauteville, Count of Sicily, Lord of Malta, to this smallest of his dominions. When, between the World Wars, it was suggested to Malta by the English College of Arms that the Colony should regularize its arms by formally recording them at the College, Malta replied that it had borne those arms for nearly three centuries before the foundation of the College by Richard III.

The position was ultimately adjusted with the College in 1943, when Malta's coat-of-arms received the honourable augmentation of the George Cross.

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Malta Government Hall-marks for Gold and Silver

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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GOZO

CHAPTER XIX

Gozo

All round the cave-mouth there flourished a luxuriant copse of alder trees and black poplars and rich-scented cypresses: therein roosted birds of long wing, owls and hawks and chattering hook-billed crows—birds of the sea whose livelihood was from the waters. A young strong vine loaded with bunches of grapes wreathed the opening of the cave. Four springs quite near together jetted out translucent water in separate rills ingeniously contrived, each to water its own garden-plot. The soft lawns were starred with parsley and violets. Even an immortal coming upon the nook would pause before its beauty and feel his heart made glad.

IT IS POSSIBLE—INDEED, PROBABLE—THAT THE MODERN visitor would fail to recognize from these words, taken from T. E. Lawrence's translation of the *Odyssey*, the cave of Calypso as it appears to-day, surmounting and overlooking the sandy bay of Ramla on the north coast of Gozo. Still less easily, perhaps, would he recognize it from the passage in *Télémaque* in which Fénelon describes the grotto in language even more exuberant. As Malta is S. Paul's island, so is Gozo Calypso's; and it may be that nothing but an earthly paradise was deemed meet for the entertainment by an immortal of so critical a guest as Odysseus.

True, there are corners of Gozo that fall not far short of the picture imagined by the great Archbishop of Cambrai: I have in mind especially the little Chapel of Lunzjata (the Annunziata) in a grove of ancient almond- and carob-trees between Victoria and the village of Kerchem, facing the munificent Perellos's graceful fountain at the head of the rich little *wied* (valley) that runs down to Xlendi. Whether this glade is seen in the spring, when it is a mass of blossom

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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that would not disgrace Taormina, or in the summer, when its tangled mass of vegetation forms an almost solid screen of verdure from the blazing sun, it would seem a fitting lair for the daughter of Atlas if it did not rather conjure up, with its figs, its vines, its calamus and its pomegranates, a vision of the Song of Songs.

Certainly Gozo is more fertile, less rocky, more verdant than is Malta. Edward Lear called its scenery "pomskizillious and gromphiberous, being as no words can describe its magnificence." It is not broken up to anything like the same extent by the stone and rubble walls which in the larger island so provokingly conceal gardens and fields from all except aviators. In Gozo it is easy to enjoy wide vistas of green corn and purple clover, of terraced cultivation along the contours of its seven flat-topped hills.

Like Malta, Gozo ends on its south-western coast in sheer rock-faces that rise abruptly as much as 400 feet from the sea. But elsewhere its coast-line is more varied than Malta's, with its pleasant miniature fjords of Xlendi and Xini, the yellow sands of Ramla, the blue lagoon of Qala Dwejra, the mysterious landlocked bay of Kawra, the grim cliffs of Ta Ċenċ and Ras il Wardija. Its architecture, too, is highly characteristic, and although its villages bear a general resemblance to the casals of Malta, they can be distinguished from these by the handsome carved stone balconies which have happily remained one of Gozo's pleasantest and most live traditions. These balconies are a feature throughout the island but are to be seen at their best in the Manderaggio of Victoria, for Gozo, too, has its Manderaggio.

The capital of the island, Rabat or Victoria—Rabat because it is the suburb of the walled fortress above it—sprawls pleasantly at the foot of the great rock on which rises, like Edinburgh Castle, its bastioned and embattled citadel. This high place was designed as a stronghold, a place of refuge from the Barbary pirates, just as were the little hill-towns of the Riviera, Eze and many another, that look down on the

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[P. 22]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
GOZO
COMINO

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Gozo

Corniche from heights as inaccessible as nature and man's ingenuity could make them. When the marauders from North Africa ceased to be a menace, the citadel was partly evacuated for the lower town, but happily was never abandoned completely. Even now it contains the cathedral of the diocese and the Law Court and Public Registry, formerly the residence of the Governors of Gozo; and, although many of its ancient houses are in ruins, a few are still inhabited.

One interesting little lane with façades of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was restored by the Government before the outbreak of the Second World War, as has been the handsome Renaissance building facing the entrance to the citadel latterly known as the Bondi Palace, as related at the end of Chapter XIII. One of the houses in the lane at one time belonged, as an inscription testifies, to the soldier Bernard, "*miles Bernardus*," who was killed at the capture of the citadel by the Turks under Sinan Pasha in 1551. When he saw that the fortress could hold out no longer this dauntless man took the lives of his wife and two daughters with his own hand to save them from being sold into captivity, and then fell, fighting to the end. The walls and fortifications of the citadel are happily well preserved.

Gozo was Ogygia or Gaulos to the Greeks, *gaulos* (γαῦλος) being the word the Greeks had for the round merchant-boats of their rivals, the Phœnicians. From Gaulos it became Gaulum to the Romans, then appears on Idrisi's map of 1154 as Ghudash, and in modern Maltese is known as Ghawdex (pronounced Audesh), its Bishop signing as *Episcopus Gaudisiensis*. The shortest ferry-crossing between the two islands is only four miles, yet many Gozitans have never been to Malta while the overwhelming majority of Maltese have never been to Gozo.

The Gozitans are a frugal, thrifty, reserved, at times somewhat (yet not unpleasantly) dour people, who are regarded in Malta in much the same way as the Scots are

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
Gozo

sometimes regarded in England—in other words, as hard-headed folk whom nothing will keep out of the best jobs. It is certainly true to say that, loth as they may be to leave their own little island, when they do it is definitely to better themselves. They make excellent colonists in Australia and elsewhere in the New World, while those who emigrate no farther than Malta frequently attain distinction. The story is told of a function in S. John's Co-Cathedral in Valetta at a time, not so many years ago, when the Gozitans who were leading personages in Church and State included the Archbishop of Malta, Mgr Pace.

"Well," said a Maltese worshipper, after watching the entry into the church of the procession of Archbishop and Canons and other dignitaries, mostly (or so it seemed to him) natives of the junior island, "I suppose we ought to be thankful that the sacristan is still a Maltese."

Byron may have had something similar in mind when he bracketed Malta with Gozo as

> Calypso's isles,
> The sister tenants of the middle deep,

instead of describing them as mother and daughter.

There is much to see in this small island of 27 square miles and as many thousand inhabitants besides natural scenery and the monuments alluded to above. Let me instance some characteristic features of various widely different epochs of Gozo's long history. First must come the twin Stone Age temples of Ggantija, through their cyclopean construction—one block has the formidable dimensions of 12½ by 17½ feet—the most stupendous work of Neolithic man in the Maltese archipelago. Farther excavation by the Malta Museum is planned on and around their site when funds permit, and more wonders may yet come to light. Meanwhile the visitor may enjoy from one of the most impressive architectural survivals of remote antiquity a comprehensive view of Gozo and of the north-western end of Malta, with

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Gozo

Comino between them separated from the islet of Cominotto by a channel of the palest green.

Traversing thousands of years, let us next notice a reminder of the rule of Rome in the Latin inscription embedded in the entrance to the citadel, dating from the time when Gozo was a separate *municipium* of the Roman republic. Now for a glimpse of Islam, a legacy of the two centuries—from 870 to 1090—when the Arabs were the lords of these islands. Between the villages of Xewkija and Sannat on the road now called Ta Maimuna was discovered about three hundred years ago a slab of marble bearing an Arabic inscription in Kufic characters. This slab was the tombstone of an Arab girl named Maimuna, and the inscription is not only a fine piece of lapidary work but a human document from which I quote without apology:

> "Ask thyself," cries Maimuna from the grave, "if there is anything everlasting, anything that can repel or cast a spell upon death.
>
> "Alas, death has robbed me of my short life; neither my piety nor my modesty could save me from him. I was industrious in my work, and all that I did is reckoned and remains.
>
> "Oh, thou who lookest upon this grave in which I am enclosed, dust has covered my eyelids and the corners of my eyes.
>
> "On my couch and in my abode there is nought but tears; and [what will happen] when my Creator comes to me?
>
> "Oh, brother, take. . . ."

And here little Maimuna's pathetic message comes to an abrupt end.

The passage of a few more centuries brings us to the spacious days of the Knights of S. John, the study of whose rule in Gozo may be facilitated by reference to the archives of the island's "University," for Gozo had, like Malta, its own "University" until the beginning of British rule.[1] It

[1] These archives were rescued from oblivion after the Second War by the Commissioner of Gozo, Mr E. Montanaro, and are now preserved in the Commissioner's Office.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Gozo

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CHARACTERISTIC STONE BALCONY, VICTORIA, GOZO
[See p. 220.]

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LANDLOCKED BAY OF KAWRA, GOZO
[See p. 220.]

[facing P. 224]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Gozo

may also be combined with a tricky piece of rock-climbing—how tricky the writer can testify from personal experience—by anyone prepared to scale the precipitous islet known as the Fungus Rock, which closes the entrance to the lagoon of Qala Dwejra.

This impressive and now almost inaccessible rock takes its name from the strange and repellent-looking black plant (*Fucus coccineus melitensis*) which grows on its summit and in the days of the Order was regarded as a sovereign remedy against hæmorrhage and dysentery. The plant was a perquisite of the Grand Masters, and a guard was provided in a tower on the mainland to keep away trespassers. Those who came legitimately to take the fungus landed by means of a basket suspended on ropes stretched between the rock and the nearest point on the mainland; an old water-colour in the Malta Museum depicts this means of transit, which has long since disappeared. It was evidently of a somewhat precarious nature, at all events to judge from the account of a gentleman who effected the passage in 1815:[1]

> One object of curiosity on the south side of the island [*sc.* Gozo] is a rock, on which grows a kind of fungus, which is used as a styptic. The passage to this rock is rather curious, if not dangerous; two ropes are made fast on each shore, on which a box with grooves on its edges passes over. A Maltese first works his way across, then the person desirous to go over draws the box back and seats himself in it, when he is hauled over by the guide; in this manner as many as please can go, one at a time.
>
> It is not a very pleasant sensation to be suspended some hundred feet above the water, and if there is any wind, the movement of the box is anything but agreeable, and all that can be obtained are a few pieces of fungus. I was well pleased to be back again, and made a determination never to risk my precious carcase in that conveyance again. It seems very strange to be swinging up in the air between two rocks, with sea-gulls and other aquatics flying about below you.

[1] From *Malta Sixty Years Ago*, by Claudius Shaw (London, 1875).

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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133

FUNGUS ROCK, GOZO

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THE SAME, SHOWING ANCIENT ROPEWAY
From an old water-colour in the Malta Museum.
[See p. 225.]

[facing p. 225]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Gozo

Among the more accessible survivals of the Order is the large and impressive Fort Chambray, which commands the island's principal port of Mġarr. This stronghold was built, as we have already seen, by Jacques de Chambray, one of the last of the great Admirals of the Order, when he was Governor[1] of Gozo in the middle of the eighteenth century so that the island should no longer be at the mercy of every raiding enemy. Not that Fort Chambray had ever to endure a siege at the hands of the Barbary pirates. Its value in that direction was mainly a prophylactic one. But it did serve a military purpose during the death-pangs of the Order in 1798, when the Gozitans under their Governor and three of the Knights shut themselves up within its walls, determined to hold out as long as they could against the surprised French, who had not expected any resistance.

Then there is the Banca Giuratale, a graceful, semicircular Baroque structure which Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena erected at the end of the main square of Victoria as the offices of the Jurats of Gozo. Another was until 1943—alas, that the past tense has to be used here—the charming manor outside Xewkija known as the Torri Gourgion. Although it had fallen somewhat from its high estate and had been reduced to the status of a farmhouse, this unspoiled piece of seventeenth-century rural architecture, embellished by a charming well, yet retained externally all the dignity of that lordly epoch. Its stone drop-boxes alternating with elaborate stone escutcheons, its tall staircase tower topped by a conspicuous dome, its suggestion of the fortified country-house —all these features made it the only structure of its kind in the Maltese Islands.

It is indeed lamentable that it should have had to be razed to the ground in 1943, not by enemy action but to make room for a temporary American aerodrome required in

[1] The Governor of Gozo, known in Maltese as the Hakem, lived in the house in the Citadel which, as has been said, is now the Law Court and Public Registry.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
Gozo

342 connexion with the invasion of Sicily and destined to be
648 used only once.[1]

Lastly, to prove that Gozo lives not only in the past, let
346 me mention the pilgrimage church of Ta Pinu, a lofty
341 basilica in the beautiful white limestone of the island completed as recently as 1931. This shrine is impressive as an example of modern Romanesque no less than as proof of the active piety of a laborious and God-fearing people.

[1] A public-spirited citizen of Xewkija, Mr L. Zammit Haber, has piously preserved all the carved escutcheons, inscriptions and balcony stones of the Torri Gourgion.

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Arms of Gozo

[pp. 228–232 have not been Processed]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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"The Bulwark of the Faith" had become the bulwark of freedom in the Middle Sea. Justly had it merited its latest title of "Malta, George Cross."

The tenacity of the Maltese during their long ordeal recalls to me the epitaph written by Tymnes, a Greek poet of the second century B.C., on a Maltese dog:

> He came from Malta; and Eumelus says
> He had no better dog in all his days.
> We called him Bull.

Such might have been Great Britain's tribute after the second Siege of Malta to her watchdog-island in the Mediterranean.

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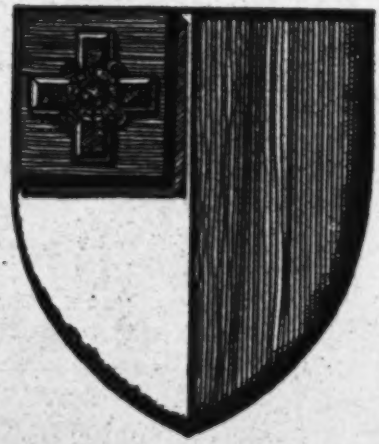

Arms of Malta, George Cross

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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CHAPTER XXI

After the Second World War

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795 TO THE STORM AND STRESS OF THE WAR YEARS SUCCEEDED other activities imposed by other pressures. Urgent was the need to repair the bombed areas; to stabilize an economy disturbed by war and post-war conditions; to speed up emigration from the world's most heavily overcrowded political unit; to take into consideration the ferment in men's minds which prolonged wars on a major scale have never yet failed to generate. The circumstance that the ferment took less unsettling forms in Malta than in some other parts of a war-distracted world may be ascribed to the steadying influence of the Church.

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652 Britain herself, though bowing beneath the weight of unprecedented taxation, did not fail to recognize the needs and deserts of her Maltese bulwark. "There will be general agreement," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons in 1942, "that the outstanding gallantry shown by the people of Malta in the face of enemy attacks of unprecedented length and severity calls for some special recognition." A first free gift of ten million pounds, made there and then by the British Government for restoration of war damage and reconstruction, was followed by an additional grant of twenty millions for the same purposes. To these were added substantial and still continuing annual grants of several millions a year in aid of the local revenue.

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701 From 1813 to 1946, except for one four-year interval, the Governors of Malta had been distinguished serving soldiers—Field-Marshals and Generals on the Active List of the Army and Commanders-in-Chief, not only in name but in effect,

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

of the islands' military forces. The exception was the Right Honourable Richard More O'Ferrall, an Irish Roman Catholic Member of Parliament who had been a junior Minister in Lord Melbourne's Administration and was Governor of Malta from 1847 to 1851. O'Ferrall was sensitive, high-minded, well-intentioned and an indefatigable reformer; a Liberal by instinct, he gave Malta its first part-elected Legislative Council. But his very reforming zeal laid him open to bitter attacks and misrepresentation, which led to his premature resignation.

The experiment of placing a civilian and a politician in charge of Malta was held to have failed and was not repeated until 1946, when the Labour Government appointed a Socialist Member of Parliament in the person of Mr F. Douglas (later Lord Douglas of Barloch) as Malta's second civilian Governor. A new departure was made when Douglas was succeeded in 1949 by Sir Gerald Creasy, the first regular member of the Colonial Service to hold the appointment; yet another, when Creasy was succeeded in 1954 by Major-General Sir Robert Laycock. Although General Laycock is a distinguished soldier whose military career culminated in the post of Chief of Combined Operations during and after the Second World War, he had already retired from the Army before coming to Malta; his appointment was a civil one, not a revival of the military Governorship. So was that of Admiral Sir Guy Grantham, a former Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Station, who retired from the Navy immediately before succeeding Sir Robert Laycock in 1959.

2

Sections 2 to 4 of this chapter may be skipped by the reader not interested in Malta's constitutional vicissitudes between the restoration of self-government in 1947 and its temporary withdrawal in 1959. The book would, however,

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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600 be incomplete without some record of these events. It is a complex story but I will endeavour to tell it as succinctly as possible.

642 648 On the 7th July 1943, while the war was yet raging and Malta still in jeopardy, the British Government had made a Declaration from which I quote the following paragraphs:

> His Majesty's Government have had under consideration certain representations which have been made by the elected members of the Council of Government in Malta, who have asked for an announcement regarding their intentions in relation to farther constitutional development. Since the present Constitution of Malta was inaugurated in 1939 the fortress has successfully withstood a siege of two and a half years. During the siege the Island was subjected to heavy and sustained attacks from the air and to a food shortage of increasing gravity. By their steadfastness and fortitude under the severe hardships thus occasioned, the people of Malta together with its gallant garrison rendered services of incalculable value to the allied cause. . . .
>
> For more than ten years, between 1921 and 1933, the people of Malta enjoyed full legislative and administrative responsibility under the Crown in the conduct of their national affairs, the control of naval and military Services and of all matters appertaining to the position of Malta as an imperial fortress, or otherwise affecting imperial interests or policy, being reserved to the Imperial Government. It is the policy of His Majesty's Government that responsible government in the same sphere should again be granted to Malta after the war.

642 646 After the conclusion of hostilities no time was lost in taking the first steps to implement this undertaking. In 1944 a National Congress representative of all the constituted bodies recognized by the Government of Malta prepared the way for a National Assembly, summoned to consider plans for a new Constitution to replace the so-called "MacDonald Constitution" of 1939. This in its turn had followed one

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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of 1936, which superseded the original self-governing Constitution of 1921. In 1946 Sir Harold MacMichael, a distinguished retired administrator in the Middle East, was invited by the British Government to formulate detailed proposals for constitutional reform after consultation with the National Assembly. His recommendations[1] provided for a Legislative Assembly of forty members elected on a system of proportional representation and led to the re-establishment of self-government in September 1947.[2] But some responsible elements regretted that they made no provision for the Second Chamber or Senate which had existed under the Constitution of 1921.

The elections gave Malta the first Labour Government in its parliamentary history, under Dr (later Sir) Paul Boffa; this made way in 1950 for one formed by the Nationalists, whose earlier dismissal had led to the suspension of the Constitution in 1933.[3] The new Government was headed—for such are the vicissitudes of politics—by the veteran pro-Italian Enrico Mizzi, who had been interned in East Africa during the war and died in December 1950, three months after taking office. In 1951 his successor, the Nationalist Dr G. Borg Olivier, formed a Coalition with Dr Boffa's "Malta Workers' Party"; this Coalition remained in power until defeated in 1955 by the Left-Wing Labour Leader, Mr Dominic Mintoff,[4] a former Rhodes Scholar who had been Minister of Public Works and Reconstruction in the Boffa Ministry but seceded from his former chief in 1950.

Already in the time of Dr Borg Olivier there had been inaugurated a series of talks in London between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Maltese Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition on proposed changes in Malta's

[1] Published in 1947 as Colonial No. 207 and analysed in the White Paper "Malta; Statement on Constitutional Reform (Comd. 7014) of Jan. 1947."

[2] See p. 137.

[3] See pp. 135–137.

[4] Mintoff is a variation of the name usually spelled Mintuf, which is the Maltese word meaning 'plucked.'

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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642 constitutional status. The British Government had felt
648 unable to accept the Nationalists' request for Dominion
668 status and the transfer of responsibility for Malta from the Colonial to the Commonwealth Relations Office; but neither Party regarded as adequate the British counter-proposal for the removal of Maltese affairs from the Colonial to the Home Office. In 1954 the British Government suggested all-party talks, to be held in London, and Mr Mintoff accepted the suggestion on assuming office in February 1955.

64 Mr Mintoff now put forward the novel proposal that
668 Malta, while retaining its local autonomy and local Parliament (with power to legislate on all matters other than defence and external affairs), should be "integrated" with the United Kingdom and be represented in the House of Commons at Westminster by not fewer than three Members elected in accordance with United Kingdom electoral laws. The British Parliament's reaction to this interesting suggestion proving generally sympathetic, the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, announced in July 1955 that a Round Table Conference consisting of representatives of all political parties at Westminster would be convened for its consideration. The Round Table Conference of seventeen members (including Lord Attlee, Mr A. Bevan and Mr Clement Davies) under the Chairmanship of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilmuir, held twelve plenary sessions in London and three in Malta. Its Report was published in December 1955.[1] The Conference concluded that Maltese representation at Westminster was "practicable and reasonable" and recommended its acceptance by Her Majesty's Government and Parliament if also accepted by the people of Malta.

64 A referendum to ascertain the wishes of the Maltese was
666 held—somewhat prematurely as was thought by some—on
668 the 11th and 12th February 1956. The figures of the referendum showed:

[1] As Command 9657.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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in favour of integration	67,607
against	20,177
invalid votes	2,559
votes cast	90,343

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As the names on the Electoral Register totalled 152,583 the number of those who refrained from voting was 62,240; and it was assumed that most of the abstentions were due to the misgivings of the Church, which, if not openly hostile to the plan, was certainly not articulate in its favour. Obviously, too, the implications of the proposal far transcended purely constitutional issues: the entire Maltese economy was involved, with inevitable changes in the standard of living and economic consequences for good or ill difficult to forecast. Such terms as "parity" and "equivalence" were added to the slogans of the day.

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Those opposed, for one reason or another, to Integration as propounded by Mr Mintoff argued that the poll, although showing a majority *of those voting* as in favour of the proposal, had certainly not resulted in the clear, unmistakable overall majority envisaged as necessary by the Round Table Conference. Her Majesty's Government shared this view to the extent of deciding that the Maltese electors should have another opportunity to pronounce themselves on the subject. On the 28th March 1956, after a debate in the House of Commons, Sir Anthony Eden announced the Government's intention of implementing the Round Table Conference Report in a Bill to be drafted in two parts, the first to contain a new Constitution for Malta, the second to deal with Maltese representation at Westminster. But the Maltese people would be enabled once more to declare their views on Integration at a General Election, to be held in Malta before the United Kingdom Bill finally became law.

The position, then, by the middle of 1956 was that under the constitutional arrangements proposed by the Round Table Conference and accepted by Her Majesty's

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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64 Government the Maltese people would be represented, if
666 they so decided in a General Election, by three Members at
668 Westminster. They would keep their own Legislative Assembly with an enhanced measure of autonomy since a single Maltese Government would take the place of the existing Diarchy; only a reduced number of matters, mainly concerned with foreign affairs and defence, would remain the exclusive responsibility of the Parliament and Government
[651] of the United Kingdom. The Maltese Government would retain responsibility for taxation in Malta until such time as the Maltese economy was held to have reached a level comparable with that of the United Kingdom.

642 Meanwhile discussions between Her Majesty's Govern-
648 ment and Mr Mintoff's Administration continued with
668 fluctuating fortunes on the constitutional, economic and
464 financial aspects of the Integration policy. Here the perennial difficulty remained: the conception of "economic equivalence" which Mr Mintoff had been holding out to his supporters as the indispensable accompaniment of Integration and sought to impose on Her Majesty's Government. Negotiations were heading towards a deadlock when in April 1957 a new element of difficulty was injected into the situation by the visit to Malta of the British Minister of
[504] Defence. Mr Sandys's announcement that the changes in British Defence policy and their consequential cuts in Defence expenditure would affect the Dockyard, Malta's greatest single employer of labour, created serious anxiety despite the reassurance in the Minister's statement that in any future war Malta would no longer be, as she had been in the last one, "in the very centre of the European battle area."

464 The anxiety was real, widespread and justified, for over
668 13,000 Maltese are in regular employment in the Dockyard
504 out of a national working population of just under 83,000 and are the wage-earners for a very considerable proportion of the total population. The Dockyard has always been, in Mr Lennox-Boyd's phrase, "the industrial

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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SENGLEA FROM THE VALETTA SIDE OF THE GRAND HARBOUR
[*See pp.* 55, 69.]

THE THREE CITIES AND PART OF THE DOCKYARD, LOOKING TOWARDS VALETTA
In between, Vittoriosa and Fort S. Angelo.
[*See pp.* 47, 240–41, 249 *and* 250.]

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[facing P. 240]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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[793]

core of Malta." The average Dockyard hand did not know if his job might not come to an end by the end of the year; and representatives of all classes in the country, including the parish priests, passed resolutions pressing for a guarantee of alternative employment if the Dockyard were to close down.

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In the following month the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Lennox-Boyd, put forward a new proposal to avert the threatened deadlock. While adhering to the Integration policy, and to "equivalence" of the Maltese economy and standard of living as an ultimate aim, he proposed an experimental period or trial run of five years for the Maltese economy to approximate itself to that of the United Kingdom. During this period the British Government would afford economic assistance towards the attainment of this object, consisting of a grant of £25,000,000 over the five years; assistance with educational, health and other social services based on a percentage of what the Maltese were able to do for themselves; and an obligation to help if unemployment rose above the British level in consequence of Defence cuts. Meanwhile Maltese representation at Westminster would remain in abeyance.

Even so, Mr Mintoff was not satisfied. On the 14th December he tendered his resignation owing to a difference of opinion with a section of his supporters in the General Workers' Union but withdrew it three days later; and he then raised the cry of independence as the alternative if he failed to obtain Integration on his own financial terms. The Nationalist Opposition, which had combated Integration, proved ready to support the converse alternative, for on the 30th December 1957 their representatives in the Legislative Assembly voted for Mr Mintoff's Resolution threatening severance of the link with Britain, which was passed unanimously and with acclamation in the following terms:

> That, as the British Government is not prepared to honour the obligation assumed by that Government, in the declaration

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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ARMS AND INSCRIPTION ABOVE THE MAIN GUARD, VALETTA
[See p. 119.]

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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

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The Governor
Malta.

To know her brave people
Awarded the George Cross to the
Island Fortress of Malta to bear
witness to a heroism and devotion
that will long be famous in history.

George R.I.

April 15th 1942.

KING GEORGE VI'S LETTER AWARDING THE GEORGE CROSS
[See p. 231]

[Facing P. 241]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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668 of July 1955, to avoid unemployment, the representatives of the Maltese people, in Parliament assembled, declare themselves absolved from their pacts and obligations towards the British Government, and from those so far assumed towards the Allies of that Government—this position to obtain for so long as the British Government fails to guarantee that the number of persons employed by the said Government in Malta shall not decrease before there is "alternative employment" for those discharged.

On this inauspicious note ended the year 1957 despite the patient efforts of the Government in London and of Sir Robert Laycock and his advisers in Malta to bring the protracted and often vexatious negotiations to a happy issue. The latter's task thereafter was made no easier by a Circular issued in February 1958 to Heads of Departments and all other Malta Government employees forbidding them on pain of disciplinary action "to make any verbal or personal contacts on any official matter with any member of the other side of the Diarchy" without the personal permission of the Minister concerned. In April these words were extended to cover "any official matter *or otherwise*." Thereby was created the anomalous situation that the islands' officials subordinate to the Mintoff Administration had to boycott those of the Maltese Imperial Government not only officially but socially, even to the extent of declining the Governor's invitations to dinner. Be it added that the embargo was far from being universally observed, while Ministers continued to seek direct personal contacts with the Imperial side of the Diarchy whenever it suited them to do so.

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643 In 1608 one of the greatest and most innovating painters 175 of the Seicento, that Michaelangelo Amerighi who was better known from his birthplace as Caravaggio, spent some 532 months of his short and disordered life in Malta, employed 659

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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by the splendid, vigorous and art-loving Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt. Notwithstanding the Grand Master's generous protection the 38-year-old artist soon made Malta too hot to hold him. He was put in prison, escaped and died in Italy within a year or so. But in the meantime Malta and the world had become the richer by two pictures which he painted for S. John's Conventual Church in Valetta, the great Beheading of S. John the Baptist and the smaller S. Jerome. In 1956 these pictures, which had never before left the walls for which they were painted except to be put in a place of safety during the Second World War, were sent to Italy in a British man-of-war for restoration and for display at the Exhibition of seventeenth-century art held in Rome during the winter of 1956–57. Of this Exhibition, indeed, the larger picture provided the central attraction.

At the close of the Exhibition the pictures were brought back to Malta, again in one of Her Majesty's ships, but to the general astonishment were forcibly impounded on arrival by the Maltese Government on Mr Mintoff's orders without previous notice and conveyed to the Museum despite vigorous protests from the ecclesiastical authorities. The Mintoff Government had clashed with the Church on other matters but there had been no inkling that its unpredictable leader had ever contemplated the transfer of these pictures to civil custody or the use of unilateral high-handed action to bring it about.

The state of tension with the Church created by this and other subjects of disagreement persisted for another year, that is to say until April 1958, by which time Mr Mintoff, now ready to break with the British Government, decided to clear the decks by making his peace with the Archbishop. As abruptly as he had seized the Caravaggios did he return them to S. John's, at the oddly chosen time of 1 A.M. on Sunday, the 20th April. On the following day statements were issued from the Archbishop's Palace and the Prime Minister's office declaring that good relations between the Government and the Church had been restored.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Government and the Church had been restored. That evening, the 21st, Mr Mintoff handed his resignation and that of his Cabinet to the Governor.

The dramatic events of the next three days were described to the people of Malta in the following broadcast made by Sir Robert Laycock on the 24th April:

"A constitutional crisis has arisen in Malta and I want to tell you how this situation came about and what it means.

"Last Monday evening, Mr Mintoff tendered to me his resignation. He refused to form a caretaker Government but agreed to remain in office until I had tried to find an alternative Government.

"But before Mr Mintoff came to see me, he had already told the people of Malta over the Rediffusion that he and his colleagues no longer wanted to remain responsible for public peace and order in Malta.

"Yet in spite of this statement Mr Mintoff remained Minister of Police. In other words, he remained the Minister responsible for law and order. As such he issued certain orders to the Commissioner of Police during the disturbances last night.

"If these orders had been carried out the Police would have found it very difficult to do their duty. They would have been at a grave disadvantage. Now the Commissioner of Police knows that I alone as Governor am ultimately responsible for your safety. He told me what Mr Mintoff had ordered and he said that, if these orders were carried out, his men would not have been able to do their job.

"The Commissioner of Police asked me what he should do. I had not the slightest doubt that Mr Mintoff's orders were a threat to the public safety and might bring innocent people into danger, and so I told the Commissioner of Police not to carry out those orders.

"This morning Mr Mintoff recommended to me that the Commissioner of Police, Mr Vivian de Gray, should be dismissed. To this I refused to give my approval.

"Last evening, as you know, I consulted Dr Borg Olivier and he informed me that he was not prepared to form a Government. This afternoon, I asked Mr Mintoff to see me

[i.e April 21, 1958--Analyst]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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again. He came with all his Ministers and we spent two hours together. He failed to convince me that he was prepared to give the proper assurances that he would maintain law and order and I therefore accepted his resignation. 64 668

"So the people of Malta are now without an elected Government, and I, the Governor, am without Ministers. I have been forced into a position where I have had to take over control of the Administration, and I want to tell you now just what this means.

"First of all the Legislative Assembly will be dissolved and there will be a General Election at the earliest possible moment.

"Secondly, the Commissioner of Police, Mr Vivian de Gray, remains in command of the Police Force. I can tell you now that everything will be done to ensure the preservation of law and order and public safety in Valetta and indeed throughout these Islands. I trust that there will be no more disturbances and that the elections will be held in complete freedom as they should be in a law-abiding community.

"Thirdly, I want to make it quite clear that the salaries of civil servants and Government employees will continue to be paid without interruption. There will be no crisis over finance or employment.

"I appeal to you, therefore, to remain calm, to maintain law and order, and to go about your day-to-day business as usual.

"Once again I want to say with all the emphasis I can that I am determined to get things back to normal without delay. I want to repeat that free elections will be held at the first possible moment.

"Finally, I want to assure you all that the British Government and people have nothing but goodwill for the people of Malta and will do everything they can to see that you have a peaceful, happy and secure future. As Her Majesty the Queen's Representative in Malta I make that statement without reservations of any kind."

The same day were issued Proclamations dissolving the Legislative Assembly and prohibiting for a fortnight the holding of public meetings and demonstrations in Valetta and Floriana. [656]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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668 A post-war phenomenon from which Malta is not
579 immune is the Teddy-Boy, whose long locks and bizarre
656 dress as he lounges about the capital faintly recall, if only in caricature, the flowing curls and exotic clothes in which the young Disraeli postured in the streets of Valetta in 1830.
[468] A one-day general strike called for the 28th April by the General Workers' Union as a "national protest" gave these and the late Prime Minister's other lawless supporters the oppottunity for widespread rioting in which they demolished walls to make barricades and road-blocks, dislocated traffic, destroyed cars and other property and stoned the Police. One of the mobs wrecked and set fire to Zabbar Police Station. Nor was illegal action confined to the mobs. These received encouragement from above; two members of the Mintoff Ministry were convicted of intimidation and had their sentences upheld on appeal. The Police, no longer impeded in the performance of their duty by political pressure, behaved magnificently and with great restraint in the face of violent and sustained provocation.

In consequence of this disorder, whereby relatively small but carefully organized gangs of hooligans interrupted the lawful occasions of the vast majority of peaceful citizens, the prohibition of the holding of public meetings and demonstrations was extended for three months and applied to all Malta and Gozo. Another Proclamation declared a state of emergency which enabled the Governor to assume wider
[793] powers for the maintenance of public order and safety. The Archbishop condemned violence in a timely broadcast.

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642 With the elimination of factors making for trouble the
648 country settled down under the Governor's direct adminis-
668 tration, and by November 1958 Mr Lennox-Boyd thought the time had come to initiate fresh discussions in London between himself, Sir Robert Laycock and the leaders

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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respectively of the Maltese Labour, Nationalist and Progressive Constitutionalist Parties, Mr Mintoff, Dr Borg Olivier and Miss Mabel Strickland. The negotiations were unsuccessful. If I now reproduce the text of another official document, it is because the Colonial Secretary's statement of the 5th January 1959, made after the talks had broken down, is the authoritative pronouncement on the chain of events which led the British Government to repeal the 1947 Constitution and promulgate a new interim Constitution to fill the gap pending the return to self-government.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR MALTA

Her Majesty's Government's Plans for the Future

1. Her Majesty's Government have carefully considered the views put forward during the constitutional discussions between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the delegations representing the Malta Labour Party, the Nationalist Party and the Progressive Constitutional Party, which were held in London between the 19th November and the 21st December 1958. Because these talks failed to reach agreement on a new constitution Her Majesty's Government have now had to decide on constitutional arrangements for an interim period.

2. It will be recalled that Malta has been without an elected government since April 1958, when Mr Mintoff resigned and Dr Borg Olivier declined to form a government. At the same time disturbances threatening public safety broke out, which necessitated the proclamation of an emergency. Since then the Governor has had to use his emergency powers to govern Malta. In the situation created by these events, the Secretary of State decided to invite the three political parties to London last November to discuss future constitutional arrangements.

3. In their approach to these discussions Her Majesty's Government naturally had regard to the negotiations which had taken place over the past three years for the integration of Malta with the United Kingdom. Although the integration negotiations have not borne fruit, and none of the Maltese

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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642 political parties now accepts integration as an aim of policy,
648 Her Majesty's Government felt that the far-reaching self-
668 government which Malta would have enjoyed under integration provided a suitable basis for discussion of any new constitutional plan. The Secretary of State was accordingly prepared to discuss with the Maltese delegations at the talks a new constitution drawing its inspiration from those constitutional arrangements under integration on which there had been a substantial measure of agreement. This new constitution would give Malta self-government in most fields. Her Majesty's Government would have retained responsibility for defence and external affairs, for assuring the independence of the Police and the Public Service and for their protection from victimization. This constitution was based on the continuing close association between the United Kingdom and Malta, which Her Majesty's Government firmly believe corresponds to the wishes and interests of both countries.

4. The Secretary of State hoped that after an initial meeting with each of the delegations there could be a plenary Conference with all three delegations. That proved to be impossible.

5. The Labour Party delegation, at the two meetings held with them, and in correspondence between Mr Mintoff and the Secretary of State, took the view that any constitutional arrangements for the future must be on the basis of immediate independence or independence by 1962. They persisted in that view after it had been pointed out to them that the people of Malta would suffer mass unemployment and serious economic hardship if Malta were to become independent now or in the near future. The attitude of the Labour Party delegation made it fruitless to attempt to discuss any detailed constitutional arrangements with them.

There was a valuable general discussion on future constitutional arrangements with the Nationalist Party delegation but the Party required more precise assurances on Malta's eventual position in the Commonwealth than Her Majesty's Government were in a position to give. There was also a useful exchange of views with the Progressive Constitutional Party.

6. There is evidently no prospect at present of devising a Constitution for Malta which would be generally acceptable

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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to the political parties and Her Majesty's Government. Farther efforts must, of course, be made, and it is Her Majesty's Government's intention to hold farther discussions in due course with a view to reintroducing elected representative government. In the meantime it is desirable that the present arrangements, under which the Governor is using his emergency powers under the present Constitution to govern the islands, should be terminated as soon as possible. Her Majesty's Government have accordingly no alternative but to revoke the present Constitution and to make special arrangements of an interim character for the government of Malta. This will necessitate legislation and a Bill will be introduced into Parliament after the House re-assembles. The form of government contemplated for this interim period is one in which the Governor will be assisted by a Council on which there will be Maltese representation.

7. During this interim period the Governor with the full support of Her Majesty's Government will press on with economic development. As was recognized in the 1955 Declaration to which the Maltese political leaders subscribe, Malta depends very heavily on Services expenditure and every effort must be made to develop other sources of income. Much has already been done since 1955 in laying the foundation for future industrial development, to which end Malta has received assistance amounting to some £18,000,000 from Her Majesty's Government.

8. Her Majesty's Government's main aim in promoting economic development in Malta is to attract new industries. The 1955 Declaration recognized that this required a joint effort towards which the Maltese Government and people should make the best possible contribution from their own resources. A very important step in Malta's economic development has already been taken by the decision to convert the Naval Dockyard to a commercial ship repair yard and to develop associated industries. The construction of a deepwater harbour, the building of an industrial estate, the re-equipment of the Island's electricity supply and other public utilities, and the development of tourism are already going ahead. Plans for other development are now under examination. It is the

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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654 433 648 Governor's intention to ask the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for advice from time to time on current problems of the Maltese economy and on the plans for Malta's economic development.

9. Private industrial development is to be assisted by the Aids to Industry legislation which the Governor intends to enact this month. This will offer substantial fiscal incentives to new industries to establish themselves in the Islands. New industries establishing themselves in Malta will also be eligible to apply for grants and loans. In administering these various incentives to industrial development the Governor will be assisted by an influential advisory body on which there will be Maltese representatives. This body will be under the chairmanship of Lord Hives, who is already familiar with Malta's problems.

Her Majesty's Government have now decided to contribute a sum of up to £29,000,000 over the next five years towards the cost of Malta's capital programme, the conversion of the dockyard to civil use and the encouragement of new industries.

642 654 648 The 1959 Constitution came into operation, as it happened, on the 15th April, which is celebrated in Malta as George Cross Day. It provides for the administration of the islands by the Governor with the aid of a part-official, part-nominated Executive Council with Maltese representation, an arrangement similar to that in force between 1936 and 1939. There was also enacted the Aids to Industry legislation foreshadowed in Mr Lennox-Boyd's Statement; Messrs Bailey successfully took over the Dockyard, which had been converted into a commercial undertaking with the financial help of the British Government; work was inaugurated on the construction of a new deep-water wharf in the Grand Harbour.

744 73 Sir Robert Laycock's term of office, while politically frustrating, ended with a year of economic advance and new hopes. It also saw an immense advance in social services such as District Nursing and the care of handicapped children, orphans and victims of infantile paralysis under the vigorous

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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leadership and in some cases on the initiative of Lady Laycock, who worked in close association with the Archbishop of Malta and voluntary helpers clerical and lay. 744 73

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History tends to repeat itself, not least in Malta. In the times of the Knights the flags of eight Langues or Nations waved over their respective sectors of the island's defences. To-day, from the Headquarters of the Allied Forces, Mediterranean (HAFMED) beside the ancient granaries of Floriana, there fly the flags of six of the NATO Nations, Great Britain, France, Greece, Italy, Turkey and the U.S.A. There is only one change since the days when the banners of the Langues symbolized a League of Christian Nations banded against a common foe and a common danger. In the Malta of the Knights the common foe had been the Turk; to-day the star and crescent of Turkey fly over the walls of Malta beside the flags of Turkey's allies in NATO, emblematic of a common defensive partnership against a very different foe. Christian and Moslem are now linked in alliance against an ideology whose enemies are God and freedom. 648

The cosmopolitan impact of NATO officers and their wives and daughters on the Island's society has made Malta once more what the traveller Patrick Brydone called it in the reign of Grand Master Pinto, "the epitome of all Europe."

[pp. 252-266 not processed]

/Information on the Gaugau, the belief that the spirit of persons born on Christmas Eve will be transformed into a ghost and on subsequent Christmas Eves, while the person is asleep, haunt the island only returning to its body at dawn, will be found in category 774./